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RUSSIA OF TO-DAY

By the same Author

THE CONQUERING JEW
THE REAL SIBERIA
PANAMA, AND WHAT IT MEANS
THE AMAZING ARGENTINE
THE LAND OF VEILED WOMEN
AUSTRALIA
PICTURES FROM THE BALKANS
CANADA AS IT IS

Cassell & Co., Ltd., London New York, Toronto and Melbourne

RUSSIA OF TO-DAY

BY

JOHN FOSTER FRASER

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WITH FORTY-FOUR PLATES
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

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RUSSIA OF TO-DAY

CHAPTER I

THE SOUL OF RUSSIA

PETROGRAD is the head of Russia, and Moscow is the heart of it. But the soul of Russia spreadeth throughout the land and is not to be measured.

Russia is Russia. That is not a cheap truism. It is one of those big facts that the foreigner does not often remember. For he goes to the country soaked with his British and other prejudices, stuffed with conceit that he and his race own the ark of righteousness and, when he finds other people doing things in a way different from his own, he concludes the other people must be wrong.

Nations have characteristics like individuals. A black-haired Englishman does not exclaim what a fool the other fellow is to have fair hair; he accepts there must be fair hair. And as the Russian mind is not at all like the British mind, as the people are of different race and as different passions consume them, though we cannot help judging Russia from a British standpoint, it is rather like criticising a cow for not being a horse.

I went to Russia during the days of war to write about the people because folk at home want to know about them. But just as I remember the time when Englishmen preferred to believe sombre things about Russia there is more than a tendency now-times to tip the scale the other way, and believe Russians are the most wonderful people, making noble sacrifices for the nation's weal, an example to the rest of the world. Rather nonsense. The Russians never were as black as they used to be painted, and even to-day they are a good deal lower than the angels.

The Russian is calm over the war. He is not quite sure what it is all about, but when the young men are told to go and fight they go by the million. They are brave; but the German guns are big and powerful.

Yet the Russians are not a fighting people. They are not arrogant. They are kindly. Amongst the educated classes there would be much more interest in a new opera than in the invention of a gun which will throw a shell forty miles. They love their country, but without chauvinism. They are sure of the destiny of their land—and it is different from the trade thirst that animates nations which consider themselves more enlightened.

The Russian, cultured and travelled, speaking several languages, does not bluff himself that he is the equal of Britons, or Germans, or Americans, in the mechanical arts. No people I know are so childishly, lovingly frank in the recognition of their own short-

comings. But they possess something which they would not sacrifice for all the mechanical skill in the world—a soul, imagination, a deep love of beauty in sound and the written word. They are mystics; they are dreamers. That is the Russian temperament, provided by Providence.

A strange, weird, fascinating land of extremes is Russia. The Tartars from the East gave it a system of government; the Greeks from the South gave it Christianity; it gathered modernism in thought from the Germanic races, followed by a flood of affection for Latin elegance, and then back it went to Germanic influence again. The nation with the most autocratic government in the world is yet the most democratic, not as an outcome of politics but because such is a Slav condition of mind.

Russians lack strong will-power. Turgenev felt this and made one of his characters exclaim, "We Slavs are badly off for that commodity and we grovel before it. . . . We want a master in everything and everywhere. As a rule, this master is a living person; sometimes it is some so-called tendency which gains authority over us." Russia is a land where the one-eyed is happy. If you look at things with both eyes, and peer below as well as look above, as you increase in knowledge so you increase in sorrow. Russia owes more to foreign countries for her development than any other nation. Her trade was first opened up by the English. The glory of the Empire, the Kremlin at Moscow, was designed by Italians. German influence has always been

strong and Peter the Great was obsessed with ambition to make Russia western and drop all its old Muscovite characteristics. Petrograd owes its existence to foreign example. The architect of St. Isaac's was Montferand, and French artists painted the pictures. The monument of Peter was designed by Falconet. A French architect built Peterhof. Frenchmen from Alsace and Lyons started cotton and silk centres at Moscow. The railway between Petrograd and Moscow was mainly constructed by French engineers. The Universities have been framed on German models. In manufacturing, Russia has sat at the feet of England; she has taken her science and her methods of commerce from Germany; France has been her pattern in the arts.

This is not due to Russia being deficient in originality and invention. It is due to the lack of will-power. She has the ability but not the determination to carry a thing through. There is nothing the Russians cannot do splendidly, but they slacken off unless inspired by a leader. The Russian can see as clearly as any Western. He knows that certain things ought to be done; he starts to do them, and the chances are that, with noble intentions, he will stop just short of doing them. It is his genius, but short measured, which makes him at once the most delightful and the most exasperating man in the world.

The American workman thinks himself as good as his boss and he isn't taking off his hat to "any

darned other fellow." The Russian boss never thinks himself any better than his employee, and he always takes off his hat to his workmen. The talk between a magnate and a moudjik is with the easy familiarity of equals—not due to these democratic times when rank must not expect subserviency from labour, but because it always has been so amongst Russians. There is no shyness about poor relations. The Russians are tremendously fond of family gatherings and feasting, and there you will see the man of high official position, in his uniform and wearing his orders, giving the kiss of greeting to his cousin from the steppes, who has long hair and top boots and who has never worn a white linen collar in his life.

In saying the Russians are children, I have got the right description. We hear stories of peculation, of misappropriation of funds, of large secret commissions in Government contracts, and for all I know to the contrary the stories may be perfectly true. But I have yet to visit a country where there are not hundreds of flies around the golden honey pot. I daresay there are just as many "grafters" and "boodle" hunters in Russia as there are in the United States. It is a mighty mistake, however, to imagine that every official in Russia has his price. There are gentlemen in Russia just as honourable as there are in England, and the generous outpouring of our own people to assist those who have been stricken by the war has its counterpart all over Russia. Heaven defend us; and let us judge a

country by its virtues and not by its lapses, for, after all, it is the good men of a nation who mould its destiny, and not the others.

Yes, the Russians are like children. But children with wistfulness in their eyes and tears coming quick after the laughter. Most of the land is grey and flat, and melancholy skies hang low, and to the very marrow of their bones the people are religious—not as we use the word, but there is a devoutness, a feeling of awe, a wonder stretching over a kind of Oriental fatalism, which is often utterly incomprehensible to us, especially when we contrast it with some of their lives.

I once knew a great Russian musician. By our standards he was a hypocrite, for he was openly lax in morals; and yet he was one of the most devout men I ever met. He was emotional; he gave whatever he had in his pocket to those who needed help; but his method of life would shock any respectable English provincial town. The Russian has ideals, but in many cases he does not place chastity so high as we of England pretend to place it.

It is this emotionalism, idealism, running right through the Russian character, that makes one realise that until the leopard changes his spots, the Russian will never become a handicraftsman, a scientific mechanician, an astute manipulator of the money market like his brother in the more western countries. He is romantic and introspective. Russian literature, Russian music, Russian art are

individual, the growth of the soil, eerie, with a kind of rapturous sadness about them.

The Russian loves good things to eat. No land provides such wholesome fare, as all travellers will corroborate. He is generous to foolish prodigality, especially to strangers, not because he expects any return, but he joys in stuffing you with the most extravagant dinners just because you are a stranger. When he is very, very happy he wants to kiss you a good whacking, resounding kiss on the lips, which is uncomfortable. He will spend more than he can afford in hospitality, for it is his nature to give. He never "blows" about his wonderful country. And it is wonderful in its potentialities for food stuffs, a sort of United States and Canada in one.

Particularly does he hope for a better condition of affairs in Russia as the outcome of the war. His admiration of British institutions is abounding. But that ever Russia will assimilate English conditions I don't believe. Because of the way I have been reared I naturally think English methods are best. They might even be best for Russia. But the Russian character is so different from our own; the Russian looks on life and the great verities with such different eyes from ourselves, that honestly I think—though mutual knowledge will develop better understanding—the likelihood of Russia adopting British ways is distant indeed. For the Russian is a Slav, poetical, quixotical, impetuous and also given to moody meditation. That should never be forgotten.

Since Europe got on fire there has sprung up a movement which may be called "Russia for the Russians." That may be an awakening of the people's consciousness. There is a belief amongst many Muscovites that their country has been exploited for the benefit of the foreigners. Well, the foreigner —mainly the German—though his language is now forbidden within the realm of the Czar—has made a good thing out of Russia. There is scarcely a manufactured article, through the whole gamut of usefulness, that is not imported from abroad. I wonder what would have been the condition of Russia to-day if a century ago a ring fence had been put round Muscovy, and it had been a hermit nation? To write of things near at hand I do not think I would have had an electric light on my table as I scribble, nor a telephone at my elbow; nor would electric tramcars scurry past my hotel clanging after the New York manner. Nor, when I was having tea at a Petrograd café would the band have been playing American ragtime and the ladies be dressed in exactly the same manner, with those saucy little hats I admire so much, as the ladies I saw in London a few weeks previously. Without the inflow of "civilisation" Russia, dependent on itself, would have been much the same as it was in the eighteenth century.

As I walked along the Nevski I seemed to be racing past everybody, though my pace is ordinary. The Russian has an Eastern dislike to hurry. When you want something quickly the word the servant

PETROGRAD

Photograph by Avanzo & Co., Petrograd

uses, which is as near as he can get to immediately, is *cechas*, which means "within the hour." In business talk he "wanders all over the shop," and if you are determined to keep him to the point he gets confused. He can idle time over his tea and cigarettes—he will puff away from fifty to a hundred a day—as only an Oriental can. His philosophy is summed up in the word *nitchevo*—what does it matter?

He has good digestion and it waits keenly on appetite. He is fond of women, and the Russian woman can be charming. He keeps late hours, and though there is strictness during war time, the busy time of restaurants is after midnight. In the middle of the year there is no real night at Petrograd, just a waning to twilight about twelve o'clock. The beautiful thing is to get into a droshki about one o'clock, drive across the Neva, make for the islands and watch the sun rise through the woods and over the lakes—hundreds do it—and then you sip tea by the waterside and talk poetry like a Russian about the blue of the sky at the birth of the day at two o'clock in the morning. And when you drive back and the air is broken with song and the sunbeams strike the slim gilded tower of the dread Fortress of Peter and Paul, where they put the naughty children of the Little White Father, as the Emperor is called, you know there is a war; but it is such a long, long way off.

One day you are thrilled by the stalwart physique of the men, and the same evening you are afraid the race is decadent. And over everything Russia

does is a film of the mysterious. As you try to understand the unknown quality it is like gazing into a glass darkly. All the western nations have their attributes, farsightedness, capacity, efficiency. To-day Russia cannot be said to have any of these things. But Russia has a soul.

So it is that the foreigner finds difficulty in correctly describing the attitude of the Russian people towards the war. At first you get the idea that it is one of indifference; then you feel that it is one of fatalistic optimism, for the Russian has a tinge of fatalism running along the threads of his mind; and then you are sure that it is one of restraint. Maybe the real attitude of Russia's millions is one of acquiescence.

We know how the other nations are waging battle; Germany with arrogance, France with dash, Britain with doggedness, Italy with high spirits. Belgium with patience. It is impossible to label Russia. You may know the Russian temperament, how emotional it is; but in these days it is emotional only one way. Without many words being spoken one felt the depression when the news came up to Petrograd that the Russians were coming back over the Carpathians, so dearly won in the snows of last winter; that the army was retiring through Galicia, and that fortresses which had been taken from the enemy had to be evacuated. It was the same when Poland was yielded to the enemy. The Russian did not minimise the misfortune; he accepted it with lowered spirits.

But Russia has had her hours of victory, occasions which, if other nations had reaped the same triumph, would have made Berlin hysterical, Paris rapturous, and would have covered London with bunting and smiles. The Russian does not frantically rejoice over the smashing blow given to the enemy. He acquiesces, but without elation. He is sure of the bravery of his countrymen in the field, so sure that there is no need to accentuate it by heroics.

Russia is not a nation; it is a religion. You miss the national spirit, the fervent patriotism, but you see the deep religious feeling. And in his soul, though conscious of the frailties of his people, the Russian believes in the future of Holy Russia as firmly as he believes there are saints in heaven. And this demeanour, which looks like indifference, is just acceptance of the rise and fall in the fortunes of battle because he is confident that Russia must win.

Hundreds of thousands of men go to their deaths or are maimed for life. Millions may have to die, but Russia will win. That is his unshakable faith. He regrets shortage of munitions; he laments that it is his misfortune to be slow; he wishes some officials who have the placing of contracts would think less about the commissions they are to receive and more about the expedition of supplies; he grieves over the bloodshed, and wishes that the world were happier; he admits the sacrifices that are necessary, but Russia—how can mighty Russia be despoiled? And there is something impressive, a great deal that is inspiring, in a people feeling like this.

The Government calls for the reservists to leave their workshops and offices and go under arms. They go without a murmur, not with cheers but with prayers. I have seen our own lads march through the streets of London occasionally given a hurrah, but often rousing no more than the pleased but casual interest of spectators on the kerbstone. I have never heard Russians cheer their soldiers when off to the battle-front. But I have seen thousands of them standing silent, the men bareheaded, muttering their prayers, and making the sign of the Cross. The Russian soldier has no equivalent to "It's a Long Way to Tipperary." He sings as he marches, but it is a hymn.

Just as in England, everybody in Russia is anxious to help. Of course there are the society butterflies who imagine they are "doing their bit" by purchasing a couple of tickets for a charity concert; but at the other end of the scale are the great mass of people helping. There are thousands of committees all over the country. In little towns, never heard of in England before, work is being done to soften the rigours of war to Ivan.

But I never saw women knitting or sewing in public, as in England. Though there may have been cases, I did not see nor did I hear of many private individuals in Russia lending their motor cars so that the crippled fellows out of hospital might be taken for a drive. I have, however, seen squads of lame men hobbling along the streets under the care of nurses and sometimes standing in the rain, leaning

The Czar

The Grand Duke

THE CZAR AND THE GRAND DUKE NICHOLAS

on their crutches and sticks, waiting to get back to hospital by tramcar. This is not because the Russian is callous; it is simply that he acquiesces in whatever is. He acquiesced with scarcely a murmur in being made compulsorily teetotal. If the Emperor directed that all private motor cars should be placed at the disposal of the injured, there is not a lady in the land who would whimper; she would recognise it as the perfectly right thing to do.

Scarcely anything beyond the actual conduct of the war is in the hands of the Government. The Zemstovs (call them County Councils), the municipalities, and almost as many associations as in England are all at work. In England are Government military hospitals, maintained out of State funds. Every hospital in Russia where the wounded are cared for—and there are thousands of them—is kept out of other funds. All the local governing authorities throughout the country have raised money to go into a central fund for the upkeep of hospitals. Numerous citizens at their own cost have established small hospitals in private houses with from six to thirty beds. The Government has no concern about separation allowances; each district looks after the wives and children of men who have gone to the front.

My investigations lead me to conclude there is not a town throughout Russia which has not hospitals, according to its capabilities, and all administered independently of Government control. The way every municipality said, "We will care for a thousand;

we will look after a hundred; we are sorry we can only deal with forty," is magnificent. Besides, there is the provision of private hospitals. Enthusiasm sometimes provokes one to exaggeration; but I do not think I am writing more than I should in saying that it would be difficult to find a single wealthy Russian family that is not responsible for a private hospital of some sort. The only thing against the plan is that some hospitals are better equipped and the invalids have more comforts; but generosity is behind them all.

Then there is the work of the Russian Red Cross, at the head of which is the Dowager Empress. For years there have been impositions on railway tickets, theatre tickets, and such things, raising money for the Red Cross. If ladies cannot help in any other way, they can go about with a tin box and appeal to everybody in the streets, on tramcars, in hotel corridors, to contribute. I had not been in the train for half-an-hour after entering Russian territory before there was a tap at the door of my coupé and I was invited to make a contribution to the Red Cross.

Long before the war came along the Red Cross was doing a great work. Further than providing medicine and caring for the poor, it exercised great power in improving housing conditions. There are thousands of sisters of mercy now working for the Red Cross, daughters of the Imperial household, daughters of Russia's nobility, all giving their services and working close up to the firing line in attending

the wounded or in the hospitals throughout the country. Right in the arena of war the Red Cross has forty base hospitals and seventy other hospitals, besides over twenty sections right on the edge of the firing line, and something like forty thousand beds —though cases are moved away from the fighting region as soon as possible. There are sections devoted to seeing to the general health of the troops, cleanliness and sanitation, and I could give a catalogue of the supply stations and the millions of yards of dressings and the tons of medicines which would be striking but unrememberable.

The point is that the stupendous work of mercy —there are nearly a thousand persons employed continuously in the work of distribution at the head depot—is being accomplished not out of Government funds, but by the contributions of the millions of people in Russia. There are special schools where young women intending to help are trained. There is sewing going on in the hut of the moudjik and in the palace of the Empress. And this work, complicated, detailed, requiring immense organisation, is being done by the women of Russia.

Sometimes in commercial matters we are apt to accuse the Russians of being lackadaisical, loose in method, and deficient in initiative; but in the labours of the Red Cross there is evidence that the Russian power of organisation is latent, and it only requires such an emergency to awaken it. And what impressed me as much as anything is the quiet matter-of-course way in which everything has

been done. Nobody delivers public speeches about sacrifice. Everybody just acquiesces with the fact that there is a lot to do, and does it.

I have been to Russia several times. The change in the demeanour of the people now is remarkable. I remember when it was inadvisable to talk politics. Now the future government is freely discussed. In the old days the deficiencies of high officials could not be whispered; now they are debated as freely over the luncheon table as they would be in England. I can recall when a certain class of young men in Russia scorned religion. One Sunday morning since the war, I saw hundreds of these young fellows at church. I was at an open-air concert in Moscow and there was the singing and the loud applause of a song by Maxim Gorky about the life of the exile in Siberia, a song which would have been impossible in Russia a year or so ago. And here it is that the Government acquiesces. Strange things are happening to Russia to-day besides those enacted on the battlefield.

CHAPTER II

PETROGRAD IN WAR TIME

WHAT gave me some surprise was that there was rather less evidence of the war in Petrograd than in London. Twice previously had I been in the Russian capital, the first occasion in normal times, the second visit when Russia was in the throes of internal political disorder. But the capital to-day is in a happier mood than London is, and compared with Paris it might be described as jolly.

There are always plenty of soldiers to be seen in Petrograd; but a saunter along the crowded pavements of the Nevski—the widest, straightest, and in its way the most dignified street in the world—in the fall of a sunny afternoon may cause you to encounter a few limping soldiers, recovering from their wounds in the war, but not so many as during a walk down Regent Street at home.

It is rare to meet one of these big brawny Muscovites who is not wearing a decoration of some kind. Unlike the British, who keep their decorations in boxes, and only produce them on state occasions, the Russian officer always wears his orders, at his throat and on both sides of his tunic. I like the way every officer returns the salute of the humblest Russian Ivan Ivanovitch. When the Russian soldier sees

a general he stands at attention, and as his superior passes lifts his hand to the salute, and his eyes follow the general as he goes by. But the officer does not give a casual whisk of his cane in response, as I have noticed in another country, but he makes an almost deferential acknowledgment. It is a great land for military and other decorations. It is an exception to meet any soldier or sailor who is not wearing a red Maltese cross at his throat or has not one, two, three, or nine and ten medals and medallions across his chest. There was a heavy-coated and heavy-sabred policeman at the end of my street who had more medals weighing him down than I have ever seen upon the full dress uniform of an English field-marshal.

An English officer has little bits of ribbon on his tunic and miniature replicas for half-dress occasion. But the Russian officer is in full fig all the time. The only Russian who rarely wears an order is the Emperor. Amid the scintillation of innumerable radiances there is distinction in an undecorated tunic.

Occasionally a battalion comes marching along, top-coated and heavily equipped, the men bronzed and many of them bearded. They lack that straight-backed easy swing which is the characteristic of the British Tommy on the march; there is something of a slouch in the walk. They are hardy, and men with whom I have talked and who have returned from the fighting lines are enthusiastic about their bravery. Give them an officer whom they like,

A RUSSIAN POLICEMAN

and they worship him; they will face any danger if well led. But if not well led—humph!

Bulletins of the progress of the war are posted at many street corners. The evening newspapers sell rapidly. The Russian tri-colour floats from every flagstaff. Pictures of national heroes are in the windows. Print shops have photographs of the heads of the Allied States: the Emperor, the Grand Duke Nicholas, the President of the French Republic, King George, the Mikado, the King of Italy, but, next to the picture of the Czar, that of the King of the Belgians seems to be the most popular. In one shop window were the open pages of the English illustrated journals, and crowds of Russians gazed at the way Tommy was bayoneting Huns. National emblems in the form of enamelled brooches are popular, but in nearly every case of the British flag the upper white bar is narrow, not broad, so that the Union Jack is upside down, which is a pity.

At concerts the national anthems of the Allies are played, beginning with the Russian and ending with the Russian. I remember the time when the "Marseillaise" was prohibited in Russia, because it was the song of the Revolutionaries; now the band of the Emperor plays it. But "God Save the King" is not played—the air happens to be the same as the German anthem, and there must be no chance of mistake in the music; so "Rule Britannia" is played in substitution.

In one of the railway stations I saw a notice

forbidding the use of the German language. In one's bedroom, where there was a printed card in half a dozen languages telling how many times you must ring for the waiter and how many times for the chambermaid, the information in German was ruled out. In the hotel corridors the words "Sortie" and "Way out" remained, but "Ausgang" had been whitewashed over. The German Embassy has had every outward evidence of its former purpose removed, and the windows boarded up. It would look as though everything was done to obliterate Germany from knowledge. But not quite. In Britain there is a law forbidding trading with the enemy. No such law exists in Russia. Goods of German origin continue to come into Russia by means of neutral ships, but they are penalised by the import duty being increased 100 per cent., and they are not sold as German.

Petrograd is philosophic. It is in the nature of things that Russia should have her push-backs as well as her advances. If she loses a million of men what of that in a white population of over 120,000,000? There is always a considerable colony of Englishmen in the capital, but since the war began there has been a considerable inflow of American business men—Russians have remarked that the majority bear German names—and they are after Government contracts for supplies and getting them; for Britain and France have enough to do attending to their own needs.

Were it not for the lame soldiers and the pic-

turesque and swagger-walking Cossacks and the Red Cross nurses, with white cowls making them look like nuns, it would be easy enough to forget that Russia is at war. Business is running on much as usual; the theatres and kinema shows are crowded; the better-class restaurants are packed. Indeed, Petrograd is fuller than is customary, for most of the nobility are remaining in the capital instead of going to their country estates. Usually the wealthy Russians go abroad a great deal; now they stay at home.

But under the philosophic acceptance of the fortune of events, concern about the future is more noticeable to-day to a man who revisits the country after an absence of some years than maybe it is to those who have constantly lived amongst Russians. I do not pretend to have mixed with all classes, but I met many men throughout Russia associated with public affairs, and there is greater freedom in debating high national politics than could have been expected. It is not only a question of beating the Germans that is agitating the minds of men. There is a strong belief that Russia, after the war, will make another great move in the evolution of her destiny.

There probably never was a Russia such as is depicted in melodrama or florid fiction; but if there was it has gone for ever. Russia has come within the circle of western nations within the last hundred years, and now one notices a current of feeling that the twentieth century is to be the time for the real development of Russian resources.

The progress Russia has made within the last hundred years has been phenomenal. But it is felt that after the war Russia must zealously equip herself for playing a much bigger part in the industrial and agricultural story of the world's progress. There must be organisation of resources and a more intense cultivation of character—not an imitation of other lands, but a development of her own qualities into a mighty nation. It is all rather vague at present. But you cannot be in Petrograd a week conversing with public men—remembering the state of thought less than ten years ago—and not learn there is a tendency towards action. This aspiration, merging into decision, contributes to the steady optimism of the Russians regarding the war.

The war has practically doubled the cost of living. This is mainly due to shortage, but partly to the conservation of supplies by speculators. I have heard of no strikes on the part of workmen for increased wages because living charges have increased—I've an idea they do not allow strikes in Russia. In the capital there are signs of a scarcity of beef. Not because there is less meat than in normal times, but because it is wanted to feed the millions of soldiers, most of them peasants, who rarely have beef in times of peace.

All the old hot talk about revolution is damped down for the present. The Emperor, as keenly concerned about the welfare of his troops as is his cousin, King George, goes about the country visiting his troops with an openness which would

have been impossible before the war. Russian party politics—autocracy versus democracy—are as quiet as Radicalism and Conservatism in England; but they are by no means dead. As there is no division, acute and dangerous, there is more freedom in debating affairs than ever I knew before. The Russians expect great things as a result of the war—not in the way of territory, but in national development. There is a movement that the country should manufacture more and not be so dependent on other countries.

Britain provides them with a model in institutions. They would have their country run politically after the manner of Britain. That is why the ardent reformers now hold their peace. If Russia is regenerated after the war, good. But if the old Russia remains—well, who can prophesy what time will bring forth? The six million Jews in Russia hope for much, and in the past the Jew in Russia has had somewhat of a hustled time.

Petrograd in war time is more cosmopolitan than ever, except that there are no Germans. But German influence is not annulled. Petrograd is close to the Baltic provinces of Russia where the people have the round heads of Teutons and the fair hair; and German is there the mother language, though Russian is what they are compulsorily taught at school. This region provides a considerable portion of the official class in the capital—every other man one meets in Petrograd is in uniform—and though the punishment is terrible for speaking

German, I have been told, by that talkative bird that is ever fluttering round, that in some Government departments officials in quiet conversation amongst themselves find it easier to converse in the hated tongue than in Russian.

I seem to have a recollection of flag days in old England before I left home, when charming but importunate maidens, working in couples, accosted the undefended male and demanded his money in return for a rosette, or a button, or a paper flag, or something else, and the ordinary man gave his shilling—taking for granted it would be for a good cause—mainly to wear a souvenir which would save him from being molested by other maidens. It is possible I exaggerate, but I felt there were three flag days "running concurrently," as the assize reports put it, in Petrograd every day. They were all for most excellent purposes, and in the streets you were accosted by men and by women who gave you a portrait of a Royal princess to pin in your coat, or a crest, or a banner, in return for the coin you cared to drop into a tin box.

I was an interested and slightly amused spectator whilst Petrograd passed through three strenuous days of well-doing. And all the other cities of Russia are believed to have done the same. How many millions of roubles were collected would be a wild guess; but when in the mood the Russian is not only a cheerful, but a riotous giver.

The idea of helping the distant war-sufferers came from the Grand Duchess Tatiana, aged seventeen

THE CZAR'S DAUGHTERS ROLLER-SKATING ON THE ROYAL YACHT

years and the daughter of the Czar. She is tall and dark and beautiful and mischievous, and the Russians adore her. I have never seen her, but I hope to do so one of these days. I had a private seance of the kinematograph pictures of the Court, and the way the Princess Tatiana played tug-of-war against her august father and romped about the deck of the Imperial yacht *Standart* on roller skates showed that she was a lively girl.

When she started her fund to find bread and clothing for the people of Poland it was like the waving of a fairy wand. You understand the emotional character of the Russians. The appeal by their pretty princess was irresistible. The country sprouted with committees. The thing was to get money, to smile, wheedle, or bully roubles out of everybody's pockets; and it was achieved, mainly through thousands of lady collectors with personal blandishments. There was a time when I was willing to accept the story that loyal demonstrations in Russia were made to order. But it really cannot be true to-day. And though I am sure the Russians have tender hearts for the sufferers of the war, I am more than inclined to believe that what stimulated their generosity most was affection for the Princess Tatiana.

Imagination was appealed to. It would have been difficult to find a shop window in Petrograd where there was not a large photograph of the young lady, with a softly twinkling side-glance as much as to inquire: "Well, how much have you given?"

The money paid for those photographs went to the fund. At street corners ladies sat through the hot days—and it can be warm in Petrograd—engaged in a thriving trade of selling picture postcards of the princess. And all the society young ladies of Petrograd put on their best bibs and tuckers, and, armed with a shield fronted with paper medallion portraits of the princess, determinedly—I almost wrote impudently—raided the pockets of susceptible men. You may have dropped your coin into the box and had a portrait pinned to your coat, but that was no guard against further attack. The effect of the eyes of a Russian lady is notorious, and when one marches straight at you and starts pinning another medallion on the other lapel of your coat, and your mild protest is met with a smiling, beseeching, "Ah, pashalst!" ("Ah, if you please!")—well, what is a man to do? I've seen elderly gentlemen sauntering along the Nevski with as long a row of little photographs of the princess across their rotund chests as the stretch of medals worn by a Petrograd policeman—and that is wonderful.

The three days' adoration of the Princess Tatiana—you will not get it out of my mind it was the princess, and not the Poles, which did the business of the millions of roubles—began with a great open-air service in front of the Kazan Church. Gorgeous is the ceremonial of the Orthodox Church, and the heavily crowned and gold-robed priests holding aloft the crucifix always look as though they had stepped out of a painting of a scene when Byzantium was

in its glory. The front of the Kazan Church is a deeply colonnaded curve, and here were gathered thousands of worshippers. Other thousands were about the steps and thronging the gardens. But it was a public school holiday, and I do not know how many thousands of children, smartened by their parents, were there—the tiny tots saved from being lost by being corralled within ropes—and every one carrying a little Russian flag. Also there were hundreds of Russian Boy Scouts, with their slouch hats and knee-breeches, and gaudy kerchiefs and poles—but they really did lack the smartness of their British colleagues.

There was impressiveness about the service, the gorgeously clad priests on the high steps giving blessing to the bareheaded multitude below. Then the band (two bands, in fact, one at either end of the colonnade) burst forth with the Russian National Anthem, "God Bless Our Noble Czar," surely the most stately national anthem in the world. Much cheering and the waving of hats, and the Boy Scouts with their "Baden-Powells" hoisted at the end of their sticks. A second time the anthem was played, and the outburst of joy was louder than ever. A third time was it played, but the enthusiasm of the crowd swelled and almost smothered the music, so that one band finished by a good neck before the other.

I suppose the blessing of the clergy absolved the young ladies of Petrograd from any restraint in money-getting for the good cause. Their efforts

were not confined to the streets. They marched into shops and buttonholed the customers. They raided the suburban trains; they mounted the tramcars. They invaded the smoking-rooms of hotels and politely stopped you in the reading of a fortnight-old London newspaper—with, of course, the most interesting news blacked out by that censor fellow—to remind you that they had serious business with you. At the corner of the Moskaya was a motor car converted into a shore gondola, and whilst real Neapolitans were providing the songs of the South, the young ladies were going through the pockets of the crowd.

On one of the three afternoons I was taken by two Russian ladies to a special café chantant where all the performers were folk of society with "talent," and others of noble birth unblushingly demanded 2s. for a cup of tea and a chocolate méringue.

Well-to-do Petrograd people have the restaurant habit upon them. When the palm court at the Astoria was full, or the roof garden at the Hôtel de l'Europe was busy, the chatter would cease because a famous tenor from the opera had sprung to his feet and was singing. Before the well-won applause had finished, he was at you with a plate wanting a contribution to the Grand Duchess's fund. You paid and smiled, and went on with your dinner. Hush! And you had to stop your talk and put down your knife and fork and let the food go cold whilst a great actress thrilled you with her declamation. Then she was at you with a plate, and she smiled

Photograph by C. O. Bulla, Petrograd

TYPICAL STREET SCENE, PETROGRAD

and you smiled and handed out another rouble. That is the case with the frugal Briton. But with the Russian—and there is a vein of ostentation in him—he is reckless; he tossed his ten, twenty-five, or hundred rouble note on the plate. I have never seen such prodigality.

All the world knows that Russia is teetotal by Imperial decree. Not only is the manufacture of vodka stopped, but heavy is the fist of the law if there is the sale of brandy, or wine or beer. You dine at the Astoria, a sort of second-class Savoy, and the band bangs out Yankee ragtime tunes and gives you "Tipperary," and the waiters speak all European tongues (save German), and everybody is in good humour—but there is no wine to make the heart of man glad. You drink narsan, a Russian mineral water, or grape juice, but mostly you drink kvass, which is made from bread and tastes like insipid ginger-beer.

The ordinary man can wander Russia over and see neither spirits nor wine nor beer. A prohibition State in America—some of us know the use of the teapot over there—is a reeking pub. compared with Russia. If you want to guzzle you can have a tumbler of mineral water, and at my hotel the price was 1s. 6d. Deciding this was too expensive for a mere vagabond writer, I took to kvass, which is the liquid off soaked black bread—ugh! the most depressing sour beverage ever invented. That cost 1s. 6d. a tumbler. Bent on economy, I decided on a bottle of boiled and filtered water, and then to

reward my virtue, I stood myself a decent cigar. But they still charged 1s. 6d. for the water, and the cigar cost 5s. Leading the simple non-alcoholic life in Russia during war time is an expensive luxury.

One evening I went to the Bouffe, radiant with lights, and the place was thronged whilst an open-air opera was performed. Then there was a crush into a great hall, where everybody had supper at midnight, whilst a procession of women singers and dancers appeared on the stage—a somewhat indifferent performance compared with what we are used to in London. The throng was more concerned with supper than with the entertainment, though patriotic songs stirred everyone to enthusiasm. On the Sunday evening I accompanied some Russian and French friends to Pavlovsk, half-an-hour's railway journey out of Petrograd, where there is a charming park in which stands the little house which was the summer residence of the Emperor Paul. Russian soldiers sang Slavonic songs, a military band played marches, whilst inside the concert hall was a mass of Sunday holiday makers listening to an excellent orchestra. We dined in the open and watched a hundred thousand Petrograd folk promenading. Apart from the military costumes, one might have been watching a well-dressed middle-class assembly of English people in the neighbourhood of one of our great provincial towns. The war still appeared to be a long way off.

Yet, though things in Petrograd apparently run on normal lines, just as they do in London, the

facts of war dog one everywhere. The Italian waiter who brought me my *café complet* in the morning has been called to his own country to fight the Austrians. One evening at dinner there was lightness of talk and music in the "roof-garden" restaurant. At the adjoining table was a happy party. An officer came up, bowed, kissed the hand of one of the ladies, and whispered something. She went away ashen and with eyes flooded with tears; her brother had been killed. Farther down the room were four officers in the gayest of spirits, but they were all wounded.

The street urchins bawl their journalistic wares at the corners; nurses conduct their sorry processions of wounded men; but otherwise there is small surface indication in Petrograd that Russia is at war.

There is no darkening of the streets. It would be a difficult business in summer unless a giant tarpaulin were spread over the city. For summer is the time of the "white night," as the Russians call it. There is no darkness. At eleven o'clock the Nevski is thronged with people taking a promenade, and the light is that of eight o'clock in English high summer. There is a softening to deepest blue past midnight and you listen to the last numbers of a garden concert with the rising sun in your eyes.

Petrograd is the city of the white night—but there are many sad and tremulous hearts, wondering, wondering, wondering, just as there are amongst folks in England.

CHAPTER III

TEETOTAL RUSSIA

RUSSIA is never going to be drunken again. Alcoholic beverages have been prohibited, and the Russians are getting used to teetotal beverages. They are quite pleased with themselves.

All stores where brandy, whisky, vodka, champagne, wine, beer or liquors were sold have been locked and sealed by the authorities. The liberty-loving Briton, sitting in a restaurant and fancying something more potent than mineral water, casts his eyes upon the glass cases behind the counter where are marshalled rows of bottles of "the real stuff," but locked up and forbidden. He revels in imagination of the time he will have when he returns to England.

There is a good deal of cold weather in Russia and there used to be much drunkenness. Before breakfast the Russian workman, feeling cold, would gulp down a bottle of fiery vodka which cheered him and then fuddled him. Indeed, all classes might be described as heavy drinkers. There was plenty of debauchery and sometimes there were horrible tragedies.

But generally the Russian in his cups was not aggressive. He was not quarrelsome. He did not

Photograph by C. O. Bulla, Petrograd

THE WINTER PALACE, PETROGRAD

want to fight everybody. His mood was rather to roll round and slobberingly kiss all whom he met—though it might have been preferable if he had wanted to fight.

Anyway, Nicholas II., an Imperial Lloyd George, but with the power to do what he wills, conscious that a vodka-soaked Russia was not the correct thing whilst the greatest war was being waged, said there was to be no more alcohol sold. And it was so. Dealers have been ruined. But Russia is not a land in which to babble about compensation.

The nation was declared, by Imperial rescript and by the order of the authorities, to be teetotal. Of course, there was a good deal of groaning amongst the 120,000,000 white Russians. For now, if any brandy or wine is needed for medical purposes it has to be bought at an apothecary's, but only on a magisterial permit, and the magisterial permit is granted only on a medical certificate.

A good many people, used all their life to a little liquor with their meals, became ill; but they recovered. Those with the hunger of drink upon them have taken to drinking methylated spirits and other things that are evil for the inside. Many have died from excess of methylated spirits. The majority of folk have to be content with drinking tea—and the number of glasses of tea, deliciously refreshing, the Russian and his wife can consume puts into dimmest shade the lady who "swelled wisibly" in Mr. Dickens's novel.

For the rest the table beverage is kvass, which

can be made out of soaked black bread, or white bread, or squeezed cranberries, or indeed anything —and you can drink quantities of it and never get any forrader. A couple of centuries ago or more, Mr. Giles Fletcher, "a quaint author," wrote about "The Russe Common Wealth"—"the poorer sort vse water and thinne drinke called Quasse, which is nothing els but water turned out of his wittes with a little branne mashed with it."

Russians never were a light-hearted and jolly people. When they drank alcohol they did it after the manner of all northern nations, as a serious business. And drinking a lot of *chorni kvass*, the swillings of soaked black bread, is no doubt for their good. But it does not promote sparkling conversation. My purely personal experience was that after several stout doses of kvass with my lunch and dinner I began to feel this was a sad world, and that I had better get myself to a monastery. But my depression somewhat evaporated when I abjured kvass, and went the racket on orangeade.

Night life in the cafés or public gardens used to be a thing to enjoy in Russia. With excellent restaurants and bands and wine there was sparkle about midnight. But there is lowered gaiety—not all due to the war—when champagne has to be replaced by stuff which is like ginger-pop from which the cork escaped yesterday.

The hotel keepers and restaurant proprietors, who formerly sought their profits in the wine their customers drank, have long faces, as though on the

verge of an uncomfortable interview in the bankruptcy court. Anyway, to put themselves straight, up has gone the price of rooms; the price of dishes has nearly doubled—again not all due to the war—and you pay for a bottle of lemonade as much as you would for a passable half-bottle of wine at home.

Of course, all drink is not banished as though there had been a ukase consigning it to Siberia. Well-to-do folk who have the luxury of cellars can draw from stocks accumulated in prè-tectotal times. Though the punishment is severe (if found out) it is not impossible for a dinner party in a private room of an hotel to be supplied; but the price! Well, a bottle of Scotch whisky will cost 28s.

At café chantants, where parties have supper in recesses, I believe that what is needed can be secured. During several months in Russia I saw only one drunken man, and he came staggering from behind the curtains of one of these recesses. In glass jugs can occasionally be seen liquids which look wonderfully like champagne, though you are not supposed to think it anything more than sprightly lemonade.

Such cases, however, attract attention because they are exceptional. Viewing the whole of the nation, I don't believe that one person in a hundred has been able to obtain a drop of alcohol since the Emperor issued his prohibition.

With my head bowed to my very knees, I may be allowed to venture the belief the Emperor did not

quite realise what he was doing when he wrote his historic command. He was thinking of his soldiers who look to him as the Little White Father. When the breath of war spread over most of Europe the legions of the Czar had to be mobilised. Not only the men in the standing Army, but the millions who were still of fighting age and could be used were summoned to their regiments, men from Bessarabia, and Archangel, and beyond the Urals and along the Don side.

The villagers throughout Russia were willing to fight. But there had to be "a wee deoch an' doris" before they went awa'; and there was more farewell drinking and more consumption of vodka and more, until, it may be said, within limitations, that the fighting men of Russia were reeling with intoxication. It was the "misplaced kindness" I used to read about in England when generous folk stood Tommy too much beer—only much worse, and with raw spirits reducing to loglike insensibility the sons of Russia.

"Stop the sale of drink," said the Autocrat, and the men became sober.

Before the Imperial order the mobilisation was like to have been a ghastly failure. When its effect was operating the change was astounding. The orgies ceased like a nasty dream on waking—there was only the remembrance. Instead of the military authorities being in despair at the ragged muster, as attenuated and as shaky as the roll call after fierce battle, men responded not with alertness—

alertness is alien to the Muscovite character—but in order.

Quietly, correctly, without fuss, the soldiers reported themselves at their various stations. Officers, lamentably aware of the weakness of the moudjiks, have told me of their amazement at the way the men appeared and behaved. The tempestuous drunken disorders when the Army was sent to the Russo-Japanese War were recalled, and officers, not at all given to prayer, were devoutly grateful at the change.

That was why Russia, the land of illimitable distances, was able to mobilise her troops with a rapidity which staggered Germany at the opening moves of the combat, and which captured the applause of the rest of the world.

Away from the drink the Russian soldier is the best of good fellows. He may lack initiative; he may not be as well equipped as his adversary; he may be beaten back by the vigour of heavier guns. But he is a steady lad, and he has been fighting for long months on water and has never uttered a grumble. Indeed, though I kept my ears alert, I never heard any complaint from any Russian against compulsory abstinence.

Though the prohibition was declared primarily in the interests of the Army, the whole of the civilian population came within its range.

You know in England and Scotland what is the effect on the working classes of drinking raw spirits before breakfast. One must be careful not to exag-

gerate the amount of sottishness in Russia, after the manner of fanatical libellers at home; but it is well within the mark to say there was a great deal too much guzzling of vodka in the realm of the Czar and that it did infinite moral, physical, and industrial harm.

The working classes of Russia gasped and were dry-mouthed when they found the doors of every vodka shop in the Empire bolted. But they are a docile people. The command of the Little White Father has much of the sanctity of religion about it. Whatever is, is right. So Russia accepted the change, not enthusiastically, but because it was the law.

The pæans of joy over the sinner that repenteth were heard in England and in America, but not in Russia. Voluble orators and profuse penmen at home talked and wrote about Russia's noble sacrifice in the interests of the nation—all rubbish! There was no more sacrifice than there would be in my case if a doctor told me that my life depended on the authorities taking the pipe, which I am smoking as I write, out of my mouth and made it impossible for me to buy another ounce of tobacco. I would acquiesce, but I hope I would not cackle about sacrifice. And to its high credit, Russia has never posed as the smug "converted drunkard." It has stopped drinking for the simple reason there is no more alcohol to be obtained.

Vodka is made from potatoes or rye, and contains 40 per cent. of alcohol. Towards autumn the

scene in a Russian village used to be very much like that in a wine-growing district in France. Wagonloads of potatoes were brought in by the peasants and put in long tunnels timber-lined and covered with 3 or 4 feet of earth to prevent freezing. In 1913, the last of the drunken years, there were 30,000 fiscal drink shops and the consumption from 1904–1910 had nearly doubled. The gross profit in 1910 from vodka was £74,470,000; the net profit £58,510,000; so nearly one-third of State revenue was drawn from the sale of liquor. In 1913 the drink bill of Russia amounted to £150,000,000, which seems a good deal, though per head of the population the amount spent is the least in Europe save Norway. Whilst the average consumption per head in Great Britain was 66s. per year, that of Russia was only 18s.

But the mischief was that whilst Britons spend their money over many kinds of drink, but mainly beer, the Russians focused on raw spirit. In the last statistics before me, I see the Russian breweries turned out 232,330,000 gallons of ale in a year, whilst the distilleries turned out 335,360,000 gallons of spirits.

This great consumption of vodka had for a long time alarmed public men. The blessings of local option were tried—real local option, and not one-sided, as is the plan usually advanced in England—and the result was more and not fewer drink shops.

That something should be done was agreed. But there were vested interests, the farmers who grew the

rye and the potatoes from which the vodka was made, and the Minister of Finance who got £60,000,000 a year from the monopoly. Things were bad in the villages. I remember seeing that the chief amusement on a Sunday afternoon was to get drunk.

For some years the deputies in the Duma representing agricultural constituencies had been pressing for reforms, and a Bill was passed giving local authorities drastic powers to regulate hours, even to shut the vodka shops in areas where there was suffering owing to a failure of the crops. The Russian House of Lords, the Council of the Empire, welcomed the Bill of the Duma. It approved it. It also improved it by giving every community local option either to restrict or prohibit, and women were to have the franchise on this question. Everybody knew what that meant. The Minister of Finance was nervous about his revenue.

It was a tremendous surprise to the world outside Russia when the Czar showed his personal interest in the temperance question by a message to M. Barck, the Minister of Finance. It ran:

"I have come to the firm conviction that the duty lies upon me, before God and Russia, to introduce into the management of the State finances and of the economic problems of the country fundamental reforms for the welfare of my beloved people. It is not meet that the welfare of the Exchequer should be dependent on the ruin of the spiritual and productive energies of my loyal subjects."

The Government, to gain time to think how the wind was to be raised, showed British Parliamentary ingenuity by having the Bill referred to a joint committee of both Houses. Then the war exploded on the world.

Whilst mobilisation was on the liquor shops were closed as a precaution—but they have never been opened since. In the middle of October, 1914, came the order of the Czar prohibiting "for ever" the State having anything to do with vodka. But local authorities were (except in camp areas) to have the right to allow beer to be sold, or to stop drink sales altogether if public opinion were strong in that direction.

All the great towns instantly exercised their powers by turning the key on the sale of alcoholic beverages in their districts. Some country districts, however, are slow to come into line. The joke is—and it is something of a joke—that the authorities in the Czar's own village, Tsarkoe Selo, have allowed drinking to continue in their area.

Though, in general phrase, all Russia is now teetotal, important questions are being raised. At the very time the Empire needs more money the better part of half a hundred millions income a year is lopped off. There is no income-tax in Russia, and that evidence of advanced civilisation will probably be adopted to make good the gap in the national revenue.

That Russia will continue to be strictly teetotal, nobody believes. The sale of light beers and wines

is fairly certain to be allowed in time. But it is a matter of doubt whether ever again the sale of spirits of any kind will be permitted.

Vodka was the curse of Russia, and with its departure Russia is like a man joying in new strength after a desponding illness.

As one who has travelled all over Russia, knowing it in peace time, time of revolution, and time of war, I have to report that prohibition has been good for the country. I do not imagine there is one person in a hundred thousand who would raise his hand to return to the old condition of things. There has been a considerable decrease in crime since Russia became teetotal; the number of cases of insanity has declined; the suicides are reduced in number.

During all the time I was in Russia, although I ran into varying degrees of opinion, I met no one who disputed the benefits of the change. Manufacturers told me that enforced abstinence increased industrial efficiency by 25 per cent. Working-men earn more, and though the war has increased the cost of living, their families are better off than before the war, because none of the hard-earned roubles go in vodka.

I have come across few things more amusingly pathetic than men, who have been "soakers" for years, finding themselves with money which they really didn't know what to do with because the usual channel of expenditure is closed to them. The Russian workman is a simple-minded, good fellow, and it

is really a fact that in many cases he stopped work because he was getting money that he had no use for. His imagination was limited. But gradually he bought himself another pair of trousers, and his wife a coat and a gaudy handkerchief to tie over her head, then a blue shirt for himself and boots for the children, and ultimately a gramophone. He sees all these changes in his life and his "missis and kiddies" better fed. He is working no harder than he did formerly, and he feels there is something of a miracle at work.

He is getting an idea how much he used to spend in vodka. He can hardly believe it, but he sees the consequence, and he really does not want to go back to the stuff. The Russian woman is just as sprightly with her tongue as her sister in other lands, and "mother" is very explicit what she will do to anybody who opens the vodka shops again. Pawnshops are doing badly. The latest returns of the savings-banks show that the deposits have increased sixfold. The poorer folk of Russia put in the savings-banks over £50,000,000 more during the first year of the war than they did during the year before the war.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIGHT FOR TRADE

THE chief thing which took me to the land of the Czar was to look round and study the ways whereby the commercial relationship between Great Britain and Russia could be improved.

It is not difficult to understand the attitude of those who exclaim : " Let us concentrate on the war. Let us think of nothing but the means to defeat Germany, and it will be time enough when that is done to sit down and consider how we will get Russia to buy more of our goods."

That, however, will be too late, and many business men, giving an eye to the future—having a dread of the inevitable industrial slump at home when the fighting is finished, and shipyards and factories are no longer strained in building and making munitions of war, and several million men lay down their arms and want to return to their former trades—are looking to Russia as an outlet to British industrial activities.

Russia is an agricultural and not a manufacturing country. True she has woollen and cotton mills and iron works and oil fields. But a thousand and one things needed in modern civilisation, from heavy locomotives to artificial teeth, she has to import from other countries. And in the main in the past she

has bought from Germany. The statistics of German trade with Russia during the last thirty years is a panorama of amazing progress. The market was so stocked with German things before the war broke out that, except in particular instances, there is no shortage of wares, though that has not prevented the prices being increased. But Germany, like ourselves, is busy making weapons, and she has little chance to attend to her export trade. So in a few months, no matter how willing the Russian purchaser will be to pay the extra cost owing to the heavy duty, there must be a shortage. America, which hitherto has confined her operations in Russia to locomotives, rails, and agricultural machinery, is jumping in. One of the biggest hotels in Petrograd seems to be half full of American business men, seeing how they are going to get a grip of the general trade whilst the European nations have one another by the throat. In Paris there recently sat a Government committee, with M. Méline as chairman, carefully developing a plan which it is hoped will be put into operation when peace is proclaimed, so that the commercial interests of France in Russia may be improved.

In England we have friendly societies for maintaining amiability between Russia and ourselves. There is a Russian section of the London Chamber of Commerce. There is much talk about the need of learning the Russian language. There are associations of traders who export to Russia. But he is a quickly satisfied man who believes that all is

being done which should be done to provide that Russia shall be an enlarged market for British wares. Just as there are people in England who swear that never again will they purchase anything of German make, so there are Russians, though less pronounced, who hold the same opinion. Those British manufacturers who rely on Russia refusing German goods after the war, and so making an opening for more English goods had better drop that pretty idea, and at once. Russian traders, like the majority of our traders at home, will buy in the cheapest and most serviceable market, and care very little for the place of origin.

"Ah," I have heard men contend, "but Russia is sure to give a preference to her Allies by putting a heavier tax on the manufactured articles from Germany which are sent across her frontier."

At first thought I was disposed to enthusiasm over the abolition of the "favoured nation clause," whereby every nation has a right to claim equality at the Customs House. It appeared a fine scheme that the Allies, having cemented their friendship with the blood of their sons, should behave to each other as the British Dominions behave to the Mother Country—show preference to each other in tariffs to the detriment of outsiders. But how about the neutral countries? I can vision America kicking and protesting at being handicapped in her competition with England. "What have we done wrong that we should be penalised?" will be asked. If America and other neutral countries are allowed in on

equal terms the preference will have gone. And regarding conditions of trade with a sober mind, I cannot bring myself to see that when the terms of peace are signed the Allies will be able to say to Germany, "We are having a cessation of bloodshed, but we intend to pursue the war against you in regard to your trade. We have humbled you, and we are going to shake hands with you as a sign the battle is over, but we propose to cripple you not only in armaments—for the safety of the world—but in your industrial enterprise, so you will not be permitted to compete with other nations on equal terms."

I do not see the possibility of any such arrangement. Russia herself is not likely to be a party to it. It would be England and France which would get the benefit, and, as prices might be increased owing to decrease in fierce competition from Germany, the Russian consumer would feel he was putting money into British and French pockets which he could retain if Germany were given equal right of ingress. Even were the plan adopted, Germans would get round the tariff barrier by trading through a neutral country—say, Sweden. Preferential treatment amongst kin, as the British Empire, is right; but I am persuaded that differential treatment of nation toward nation when at peace would lead to such a tangle of complications and diplomatic bickerings that it could not possibly continue for any length of time.

Let it give satisfaction to British manufacturers

that in Russia the word English is synonymous with excellence. A Russian will use the word as an adjective descriptive of something that is absolutely genuine, much as we use the phrase "a white man" as indicative of absolute, above-board straightforwardness. But when he has said that—well, the Russian generally goes and buys German wares.

Remember that at one time Britain had practically all the market for manufactured articles. Recently she has been a poor second to Germany, and will be so again after the war unless she wakes up.

Take this casual but significant fact: One day at luncheon in a restaurant I met two Americans, one representing a boot manufactory and the other representing a firm which specialises in tinned foods. I took tea with a French acquaintance, and although he did not reveal his special work he was open in saying that he was in Petrograd for commerce. In the evening I dined with three Danes, one representing the Chamber of Manufacturers at Copenhagen and the other two being principals in big engineering works in Denmark, getting ready "for the great business there will be after the war," as one said to me. British manufacturers will also want to "have a look in," but they will once more have to face German competition. The excellence of their goods will carry them a long way. But they had better understand why it is that in the recent past in proportionate progress of developing trade with

Russia they have been far outdistanced by the Germans.

Russia and Germany are contiguous, and that is some advantage in freight charges. But the real cause of German success lies deeper. All the Russian business men with whom I talked—most friendly to Britain, but never forgetting their first object in business was to make money—told me the same story, which may be separated under three heads:

1. The Englishman will not adapt himself to Russian requirements.
2. He does not speak Russian.
3. He wants to see the cash, and will not give long credit.

It is the same tale in Russia as I have heard in many parts of the world. The British manufacturer turns out a good article; he is convinced of that; he is not going to make rubbish for any foreigner, and the foreigner can take his goods or leave them. In a word, he is so conservative that he is not to be shaken from the belief that what is good enough for England ought to be good enough for Russia.

But, after all, it is the customer who decides. When I buy a hat in London it is I who say what kind of hat I want, and not the shopman. Russian tastes are different from English tastes, and although the Russian would prefer to buy from England, he buys (did buy, and will buy again) from Germany, because the Germans will give him exactly what he wants and the Englishman, with exceptions, will not.

"It is like this," said a Russian to me, picking up a cardboard cigarette-box on my writing-table. "The Englishman will come along seeking orders to make, say, cigarette-boxes. He can make a good box. But the Russian trader wants something inferior and much cheaper. Oh, the English firm cannot alter its machinery to turn out a different shaped box of poorer material unless a gigantic order is given. No, the Russian cannot give a big order; it must be a small order, and there must be two years' credit—the Englishman smiles and nothing comes of it. Now, that applies to nearly everything we import. We want cheap things, we want them made to suit our fancy—in a way that may seem stupid to you—and we want long credit. But your people say: 'Oh, after all, the Russian trade is insignificant with our world trade, and we are not going to turn our works upside down and make an article on which we would not care for the name of our firm to appear for a small order!' So be it. The German comes along. He probably thinks we are unwise in wanting a poorly made box or patterns on linen goods which he thinks atrocious, just as the Englishman does; or he may, also like the Englishman, think it unwise to have cast-iron fittings on machinery instead of brass; but he never, never forgets he is selling to Russians, and he is willing to take the order and make just what the Russian wants. And he is willing to take a small order and to give long credit, because before the money falls due more things will be wanted, and the German firm

will get that order. Why, sir, the agent of a German firm will take an order for two yards of ribbon and send specially to Berlin for it. There is the first principle of German success."

Now, take the language question. All the representatives of German firms spoke Russian. Many of the men were from the Baltic provinces, and were bilingual, as a matter of course. Some, a few, British representatives speak Russian. But the majority of British firms are dependent upon German-Russian agents, for German, though forbidden now, was the commerical language in the big towns, and very likely will be so again when a halt is called to the fighting. British principals go over to Russia (I am writing of pre-war times) seeking contracts. Rarely they speak any language but their own, and it is a thousand to one they do not speak Russian. Doing business through an interpreter, especially when the measurements of the two countries are different, puts a bar to that personal relationship which is so useful when two men, wanting to make a deal with each other, can sit down and in a friendly talk thrash the matter out.

In comparison with the 92,000 Germans with passports who besieged Russia with goods in 1912, only 13,000 English went over, and, with permits to remain a short time, no fewer than 2½ million Germans stayed in Russia. German travellers will go far afield for small orders, armed with circulars for things which may possibly please. The English Consul in Baku said: "I have met (German)

commercial travellers who represented as many as ten different firms, all, of course, in different lines of business. I knew of a traveller who dealt in haberdashery, pens, fancy goods, boots, scent and lathe tools, all for different firms. His only qualifications were that he was a good salesman and had a knowledge of the language." He went on to say that correspondence, price lists and circulars in English are constantly brought to him for translation, and he felt sure that for every one brought hundreds never reached him but went into the waste basket.

Russia did foreign trading to the extent of a sum exceeding £264,000,000; the exports averaging £158,000,000; imports, £106,000,000. Of her total exports, chiefly provisions and semi-manufactured articles, about 30 per cent. went to Germany, and the latter sent to her, chiefly in manufactured goods and machinery, about 50 per cent. of her imports. The oversea commerce was mostly under the British flag (35 per cent.), while Germany took 16 per cent. and Russia 10 per cent. In 1910 we exported to Russia goods of the value of £7,610,000. In 1914 the value had only risen to £9,850,000. Those from Germany increased in the same years from £21,370,000 to £37,270,000.

There is going to be a greater trade with Russia, and if Englishmen want their full share, steps must be taken now, and not after the war, to have representatives in Russia who are Englishmen speaking Russian. Individual firms should now send out

young men in whom they have confidence to learn the language. It is too much to expect the Government to do anything. The London Chamber of Commerce is doing something. But the Associated Chambers of Commerce and the chambers of commerce in industrial districts, which have in the past had commercial relations with Russia, or intend to make a bid for trade in the future, might take into serious consideration the establishment of travelling scholarships to send young fellows for a year to learn Russian.

Commercial negotiations by correspondence, especially when there has to be a translation in between, may be taken as hampering, for the Russian trader likes to be face to face with the man with whom he is making a contract. It is no good sending drawings and specifications, with much shuffling in the post, for alternative. What is wanted, what brings success, as it brought business to Germans, is to have a man on the spot, speaking the native tongue, who can quickly understand what is needed, and have authority to make modifications. One day a Russian, representing an English firm, told me this experience. Russia wanted millions of bags for the war. The bag-makers of Britain were after the contract. His own firm wanted it. But the bags had to be made in a certain way and of a particular texture. He might have obtained a contract if the British firm would comply with the necessities. He spent a hundred roubles on a telegram seeking a decision. In two days he got a reply saying an

answer would be sent next day, "but it has not come yet," he added. Of course, the English firms were working at top speed for home requirements; the only point of the incident is that it is no good seeking for Russian trade unless you are in a position to supply it.

Then the question of credit, which has as much bearing as anything on Russian commerce. Write it down as wrong that there should be abnormal length of credit; it is just as bad for the trader as for the manufacturer. But the Russian is a slow payer, and he works on credit, and you are not going to get him to change, especially when he finds a competitor of yours willing to give credit. I suppose, at the best, English manufacturers want a third on account when the order is given, a third on delivery, and the final third at six months. Now, the Germans have had (and may be expected to have again) ramifications all over the Russian Empire, and when an order was received and they learned from banks, and their own agents, that a man's credit was good, they did not ask for the money for eighteen months; they would extend the credit to two years, even three years. The fact that there is easy credit makes the trader friendly, his orders go in the same direction, and thus Germany in the past, by studying Russian susceptibilities, laid its hold on Russian commerce.

I know most of the argument that can be produced against the German methods. My answer is, that the Germans got the trade. By the develop-

Photograph by Avanzo & Co., Petrograd

ASSASSINATION CHURCH IN PETROGRAD

(Erected on the site of the assassination of Alexander II.)

ment of British banks in Russia much can be done to give security, to have manufacturers ready to fight Germany commercially with its own weapon, and to extend the system of credit. Russians are willing to trade with England in preference to Germany; but Russian traders cannot be expected to learn English, or to change all their customs.

CHAPTER V

HOW GERMANY CAPTURED THE RUSSIAN MARKET

In the vaults of the Russian State Bank is gold representing about £170,000,000, which is the biggest nest-egg of the real metal there is in the world. But you may travel from Petrograd to Vladivostok and not see enough gilt currency to pay for a luncheon at the Savoy. It is paper, paper everywhere, with never a golden chink.

If, in England, a frowsy and generally unkempt man, with uncleaned boots and a collarless shirt, entered a bank for the purpose of changing a £100 note the police would be sent for. In Russia you can meet old fellows, bearded, hands stunted with labour, flannel-shirted, top-booted, peak-capped, all suggestive of the artisan class, who are carrying a couple of thousand pounds in their pouches for current expenses.

Russia has some fine joint-stock, commercial, and other banks, and in impressiveness of structure they rival the granite-and-gilt palaces of our insurance companies. But your ordinary provincial business Russian is shy of banks. He does not doubt their honesty. To hand his money over a counter, however, and get nothing but a hieroglyphic on a sheet of paper for it, and to be aware that the

money is not stored in a cellar, but is lent out, is invested in property which may not be a success—well, he will agree it is right to bank, but he personally prefers to keep his belongings. So there are hundreds of thousands of Russian business men who have never had a banking account in their lives, and whose wealth is represented by high-denomination notes in a leather bag, attached to a string, and carried round the neck.

Consequently the cheque system, as we understand it in England, except in limited instances in the great cities, is practically non-existent in Russia. It fascinates Ivan Ivanovich, and he admits it is wonderful, but he regards a cheque as a kind of conjuring trick, and is not positive there is not some jiggery-pokery with a victim at the end. That a man should buy a motor-car by handing the dealer a piece of paper with the amount written on it; that the dealer should pay his shop rent with another piece of paper; and that the landlord should stay at an hotel and pay his bill with a further piece of paper to the proprietor, who may happen to be the man who has bought the motor-car, is a system of finance which nine out of ten Russians find it absolutely impossible to follow.

The president of one of the biggest banks in Russia, who appreciated the cheque system and would like to see it generally adopted, asked me if it were true that in London it was possible to go into a shop and make extensive purchases—admitting you were known to the shopkeeper—and

carry away the goods after scribbling a cheque? It was impossible in Russia. When I told him I knew a bank in the Strand, which I occasionally entered, put a penny on the counter and got a cheque on which I directed £10 to be paid to "self," and without the slightest investigation the money was handed over to me, he made a gesture which I took to signify either that the British were the most extraordinary of peoples, or that he lamented that the Russians could not inspire such confidence.

So the Russian has either to carry a pouch of bank-notes and pay all his accounts in cash, or he gives a bill to pay in three or six months, and this he prefers. He may be a large depositor in a bank, but when ultimately he meets his obligations he renews the bill or draws the necessary amount in cash. One advantage is, that he is not able blithely to sign cheques and then receive a shock by a polite intimation from his bank that his account is considerably overdrawn. Russian banks do not encourage overdrafts, but they will discount a bill at high interest.

See the hampering to business the absence of a general cheque system means. A big establishment in Petrograd purchases skins from a merchant in Siberia. It does not pay him by an acknowledgment of the amount sent by post, which will be honoured on presentation to a bank. The Petrograd merchant is sufficiently advanced to have a bank book, and very likely a cheque book. But not the skin merchant, nor the farmer, nor the cattle-ranger

in rural parts. So the big merchant employs an individual called an *artelschik*. These *artelschiks* are a class who have to provide heavy guarantees for honesty and integrity; they are like glorified commissionaires in civilian dress. To such a man is entrusted the duty of carrying the money to the seller and paying in cash. It is the same all over the country. You may employ an *artelschik* to go round the town and pay bills. He may have to go to Odessa and journey to Tiflis to collect money, and then pay another person up at Nijni-Novgorod.

Using *artelschiks* instead of cheques is expensive. It is thought to be safer, Russian business men, however, playing for safety, are in fact restricting their own commerce. That public opinion is being educated is undoubted. The use of drafts from bank to bank is on the increase. Still four-fifths of the big trade of Russia—I leave out of account personal and small purchases—is done by bill following on bill until, with accumulated charges, there is eventual payment in cash.

The things Russians constantly dinned into my head as necessary if Britain is to get the reward of alliance after the war, is that Englishmen must adapt themselves to Russian ways. Some adaptability, however, is required on the other side, especially in financial matters. Russia cannot expect to play the increasingly great rôle in the commerce of the world she is entitled to play if she is not ready swiftly to adapt herself to more western methods. But I must say that Russians are not stubborn in their

conservative attitude. Bankers themselves are fully alive to the needs of the situation. They point to the changes that have been effected within the last generation, remind you how difficult it is to alter the habits of a people, and express the hope that by degrees all will be improved.

It should be remembered, however, that one of the products of the war is a wave of public opinion that Russia should cease to be dependent on the foreigner. Look round the public works of Russia, and there you find English capital and German goods. I glanced from my window and saw the Petrograd municipal electric tramcars race by—financed from London and built in Berlin. "We will do these things for ourselves in the future," is the expression of a laudable public spirit. But Russia cannot. She has not the capital. She is not a country rich in capital; she lives on margins; and that is why she seeks long credit when purchasing from abroad and, in her internal business, lets bill follow bill in interminable procession. So whilst one runs into one stratum of opinion that the exploitation of Russia by the foreigner must cease, one encounters another stratum, not so large, but far more influential, that the salvation of Russia will be a great inflow of foreign capital to assist in developing her resources.

Taking a practical view there is no doubt the latter course will be followed. Financiers and investors outside Russia will provide the Empire with all the money needed if there is a prospect

of fair return. One of the deterrents which will operate against British confidence being so free as in other markets is the prohibition of foreign control of corporations in Russia. You will find banks of English and French foundation, conducted with as high honour as is banking at home—with an inclination, however, toward speculation, especially in wheat futures—but the effective control is by law in the hands of Russians. I put the question quite bluntly to a banking magnate in Petrograd, why if Russia was willing to have the advantage of foreign banks, she did not allow the foreigner to have a voice in their Russian management? He talked politely about the national dislike of the idea, rather than about the fear that foreign financiers would get such a hold on affairs that they would affect policy.

It is this resistance to the foreigner that explains the difficulties put in the way of the foreigner desirous of setting up a factory in Russia. But whilst this banker of influence admitted the claim of the British capitalist to have some voice, and rather approved of my suggestion that there should be one or two British directors, if not to control, at any rate to have a watching interest in their investments, I found there was a deeper objection. As I am writing as straightforwardly as I can, there is no benefit to be gained by sticking an important factor on one side. The real objection is to the Jew. The Jews are under certain disabilities in Russia. The English Jew is an important factor in British finance. The Russians believe—rightly or wrongly I do not

argue, but they believe it—that if there were British control of British financial corporations in Russia it would mean Jewish control, and at that the Russians boggle.

The banking system and industrial progress should go hand in hand. Though Britain has found most of the money in the past for Russian development, it was the German who benefited most of all. For with the facilities of further trade, consequent on the coming of foreign millions, commercial banks found their opportunity. These banks are Russian; but German-Russians were their originators in most cases, and in no case was there a branch of one of these banks where there was not an agent, also in the service of the German trading associations, ready to provide information about local conditions and the stability of merchants.

Commercial banks in Russia, as I have indicated, are showing a tendency to travel beyond their original functions and to finance industrial enterprises. To-day there are over fifty commercial banks, with over six hundred branches, and a balance of about £700,000,000. It is only necessary to see the increase over a period of ten years and the rise in value of deposits to comprehend how, with all its vagaries and restrictions, Russian commerce has been advancing. Banks have stimulated trade. The big banks have shown a movement towards absorbing some of the smaller banks; yet, compared with the great commercial countries, the banking system of Russia, though encouraging in comparison with

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itself some years ago is, in a country of such dimensions, really limited. Though there are several associations at work, such as co-operative societies amongst small farmers, there are considerably fewer than a thousand legitimate bank branches throughout the whole of European Russia, with a white population of 120,000,000. In a broad sense, therefore, Russia is inadequately supplied with banks.

Here, then, is a fair chance for the establishment of more British banks, with ramifications extending beyond the great towns. Russia will want money from abroad to reap the advantage of her natural resources. The country is wide, but less thinly populated in parts than is Canada in parts, and yet the Canadian who "stockings" all his money is rare, and the Canadian—no matter how far he may be from a small town—who has to be paid through the services of an individual comparable to an *artelschik* is non-existent.

The provincial dealers and the farming community in Russia need educating as to the value of banks. The banks which will be of service will be those which will be ready to give a helping hand in the financing of industries. At the same time, if of British foundation, they should be so established as to be a medium of information between manufacturer and purchaser. By this means, British industries must benefit through the provision of a wider field of operations.

But Russians must not think that the only

object of the foreigner is to exploit Russia. That is just as erroneous as to allege it is Russia's desire to exploit foreign capital. Dropping pleasant talk about friendly relations, it is a matter of common interest. Russia has the country to be developed, and Britain will have the millions to aid in the development. And I am not without belief that means can be found to give Britons some voice in Russian corporations established with British money, without disturbing the perfectly sound Russian doctrine that the country shall be controlled by Russians without outside interference. The thing is to create a firmer confidence in the minds of London financiers, and that is within the power of the Russians.

It is a punishable sin to speak German within the Russian Empire. It is, however, the keen ambition of every young Russian lad and girl to speak English. All through the winter of 1914–15 anybody who could give lessons in English was at a premium. Humble teachers, who had formerly struggled with adversity, found they were earning £20 a month. The stock of English primers gave out, and I fancy that for my little Russo-English dictionary I could have got its weight in—well, in one-rouble paper notes. Russian-English clerks and typists are in the heyday of prosperity. They have not to seek jobs; they are woo'd to work. A year ago all the boys who intended to go into business learnt German at school. That is now the forbidden tongue, but parents have presented a petition to the education authorities

A STREET SCENE

praying that English be substituted. English is on the boom.

There is good business in the translation of English catalogues into Russian. "But what a waste of time," sighed a humble translator to me; "I can change the English measures and money into Russian, but practically all your exporters, who have not agents here, quote a price for delivery on the railroad in England or at the dockside of an English port. The Russian merchant at Moscow, or Yaroslav, or Kiev, or Samara has no means of providing for the carriage of the goods from an English port to Russia. What the Germans always did was to quote a price for delivery in Petrograd or Moscow. Tell the English exporters that if they want to improve trade they must quote prices for delivery at the Russian frontier or at a Russian port. Otherwise, it is nearly all a waste of money having these catalogues translated, believe me."

I noticed a little alarm amongst second-generation Russian-Englishmen at the prospect of a flock of young Britons, who are learning Russian at evening classes under London Country Council auspices, flying over to Petrograd to represent English firms. And Russian-speaking Englishmen have said to me: "We think we might be trusted to look after English interests." And Russian traders, speaking no language but their own, exclaim: "Thank the Lord, we have got rid of German commercial domination! We are not going to place ourselves under the domination of any other country."

The situation is becoming exciting. Cool heads will be required later on, or there will be differences in regard to trade between the Allies. The populace cries, "Give us British goods." The trader is willing, if they are to be obtained cheaper than German goods after the war. Russian manufacturers say, "Now's our chance to develop home industries, and, though we admire England, we are not going to be put out of business by our markets being flooded with British wares." And I can imagine the British manufacturer, when confronted with higher tariffs than ever, rubbing his eyes and inquiring, "Is this the way Russia shows her friendship, after all we have done for her?" Matters will be adjusted on the international settling day; let us hold tight to that conviction. But it is worth while noticing how the wind is playing with the straws.

The shops are stuffed with German goods—the inflow of the manufactures of the enemy continues. But you cannot find a shopkeeper in Petrograd who has even a tin whistle of German origin for sale in his store. You proceed to make a purchase. "It looks rather German, doesn't it?" you ask. "Oh, no, sir; it is English; it has come all the way from England, and that is why it is not so cheap!" "There never was a thing produced like that in England," you add. "No?" the shopman says, incredulously, "then it must be American," coming to the conclusion he had mistaken the nationality of his customer. "No, nor American; it's German!" "Impossible, sir," he declares; "Swedish, may be;

very likely it is made in Sweden, but German—why, we are at war with Germany!" But it is German make, imported via Sweden.

We know that it is the English Mahomet which must go to the Russian mountain. But, let me write it down, it is very trying to the English business man to accustom himself to Muscovite procedure. Russia is the land of officials, and they all seem to grip hands and form a maze of barbed wire entanglements to hinder trade. The caste system is marked in the realm of the Czar, and those who wear uniform—and every little Russian born has a glow in his heart that he may be an official—have a superiority towards trade. Besides, every official has a superior official over him, right up to the monarch himself, and it is the first rule of self-preservation to say "No" to every application, lest the official should get into trouble from someone above him for conceding something which should have been denied.

If you want to start business in England there is nobody to prevent you, though your landlord will desire a reference to your bank that you are able to pay the rent. In Russia, the way is long and tedious. You have to get permission to start a company, and there are half a dozen departments to be consulted, every one of which is antagonistic and has to be overcome. Englishmen with the best of authority to give their views have told me that the official attitude of Russia is to discourage commerce instead of facilitating it. Further, there

is the occasional necessity of hurrying up matters with a little "palm oil." We are not always above reproach at home, but we are a long way from having the practice so common that it may be described as a national institution for everybody to make "a bit on the quiet" before he does his duty.

I wish to guard against sweeping and unfair statements. There are honourable and unbribable officials in Russia: we know that. But what I have just written reflects the invariable story told by Englishmen resident in Russia, some of them for a quarter of a century and more. They have told me of their countrymen coming to Petrograd desiring to start business who, driven to desperation by ways to which they are not used at home, have "chucked up the sponge" and returned. Those who remain have learnt to shrug their shoulders, hoist their eyebrows, smile significantly, and fall in with local customs. Writing as a sincere friend of Russia, aware of the cordial feeling toward Britain which exists in the country, fully admitting it is the duty of English manufacturers to be adaptable to the Russian market, I would add that the business adaptability should be reciprocal, and that the powers that be in Russia would do well if they endeavoured to purge their country of a practice which no Russian defends, though he may be clever in finding excuses.

The Russians admire England; in their hearts they would imitate English ways. It is wrong to charge them all with being corrupt; but they

have slipped into a custom which is pernicious, and the administrative machinery does nothing to check it. Conferences between representative business men of both countries—the banquets and back-scratching public orations can be left out—if resulting in a joint report, would have a great influence in forcing and strengthening the Governments of Russia and Britain into the path of understanding the facts, to be followed by action for mutual good. No benefit will come from each country lecturing the other on its shortcomings. The thing is to see them and remove them.

CHAPTER VI

EXPERT ADVICE TO ENGLAND

THE greatest authority on Russian trade is Mr. Timiriazeff, the ex-Minister of Commerce. He is a member of the Council of Empire, has served his country abroad, and there can be no Government Commission affecting industry or commerce without his knowledge being called to aid. He has lived in Germany, knows England, and for the better part of half a century has seen the progress of both countries in the Russian market. He is president of the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce.

Well on in years, he has the knowledge of a busy lifetime behind his opinions, and has that grace of manner which is so characteristic of the educated and travelled Russian. My introduction was over the telephone, and quite willingly he fixed a time when I could have a talk with him. And a very instructive talk it was, one late afternoon in young summer, sitting in the library of his home. Instead of transcribing his views, it is better that I should try to give them in his own words. I took no notes during the hour's conversation, and, therefore, the following must not be accepted as a literal record of what he said. But I wrote it down within a couple of hours after I had seen him.

"Yes," said Mr. Timiriazeff, "you are right in recognising that 'adaptability, language, credit' are the three essentials to any foreign country desiring to trade with Russia. I have many friends in England, and I hope that your country, with the other Allies, will have commercial benefit as the consequence of the war. Tariff advantages would be an impossibility; it would be continuing the war against Germany in another field, and would lead to much uncomfortableness. Germany will be allowed to come into our markets on an equality with other nations, and will undoubtedly put forth tremendous efforts to regain her lost position—for, remember, when war broke out over 50 per cent. of manufactured imports into Russia came from Germany. To-day we want to buy the goods of our Allies, and when peace comes there will not be that easy relationship between Russians and Germans which existed before; the antagonism will take years to subside, and it is natural that Russians should be more inclined to trade with their friends.

"I am strongly of opinion that when a treaty of peace comes to be signed there should be inserted a provision prohibiting Germany from imposing differential tariffs. With Britain we have had no trouble, and for over sixty years your goods have come here under the protection of the 'favoured nation' clause. On the surface, that looks as though Germany had no advantage which is not given to England. But Germany sent us hundreds of things which England did not. The question of England

competing does not arise. Take, for instance, aniline dyes and chemicals, for which you have been as dependent on Germany as we have. Germany's commercial policy has been aggressive and brutal, but it has been clever. We have exported cereals to Germany; we sent her raw material. She has warred for particular articles of which she had a monopoly, of things in regard to which she had benefit because other countries did not send them, and compelled us to lower our tariffs to her advantage, for there was no opening for the friendly nations to claim the 'favoured nation' clause. When we have refused she has given a preference to our competitors in cereals and raw material—America, for instance—and we have had tariff wars, ending in a convention which has not worked out to the advantage of Russia.

"With great skill and enterprise Germany got the first place in our market with her goods, and she always pressed for lower tariffs on those articles where she had little fear of competition from England or elsewhere, or she favoured our rivals who traded with Germany. What I am very anxious about is that when peace comes to be signed Germany should be deprived of the power to enforce new commercial conventions, to run for ten years and to be abrogated on a year's notice, causing much worry to our trading community. I feel very strongly about this. Preference will be shown by individual customers for British, French, or German goods; but the Allied Powers should see to it that for a very long time

Germany should not be allowed to force a convention upon us, under threat, when the 'favoured nation' clause will in no way benefit France or England. We can have no tariff directed specially against Germany, but we want to be saved from an attack which would tend to benefit Germany only, and which would be injurious to our own manufacturing concerns.

"Please tell your countrymen in Britain that Russia never was more willing to transfer the trade she has had with Germany to the friendly nations. Believe me, you are wrong if you think one of the main difficulties in the past has been that Germany had produced cheap and nasty articles whilst England produced dear and excellent things. We know the fine things England makes, but in thousands of cases we buy German goods not because they are cheap, but because British goods cannot be obtained anywhere. A big percentage of Germany's superior imports over British is not because English goods have been ousted from the market, but because Germany supplies what England has never attempted to supply. Well, here is a market favourable to you, and if within the next two or three years your people do not seize their opportunities and the market returns to Germany, Russia must not be criticised.

"For Germans are very, very clever. Their organisation is wonderful; I should think that in every bank throughout Russia there was a German agent who could supply information as to whether a prospective customer could be given two years' credit.

Many and many a time I have been amazed at the knowledge which representatives of German firms in Petrograd have had about customers in distant parts of the Empire, thousands of miles away.

"Before I was Minister of Commerce I was in Berlin. I remember going to Mr. Schimmelpfeng's bureau, a great building, with galleries running round, all stacked with reliable information about the standing of local firms and the amount of credit these firms were worthy of receiving—information all at the disposal of German exporters. Mr. Schimmelpfeng boasted there was not a single firm in Russia that he did not know all about, and he challenged me. I mentioned a firm near Moscow, not a big place, but quite ordinary, and about which I happened to have some intimate knowledge. Mr. Schimmelpfeng pressed a button, told a secretary what was wanted, and within five minutes there was lying before me a little docket containing precise information about that firm, its capabilities, its revenue, its banking account, information which I thought nobody outside the management of the firm could possibly know.

"Think of the enormous use the Schimmelpfeng establishment was to the German exporter, who was asked to give two years' credit to somebody, say, in Siberia. You've got nothing like that in England. Are you thinking of starting anything like it in England or in Russia to help your exporters to get hold of the business? The Russo-British Chamber of Commerce, which I started in 1908, is doing a valuable

work in answering inquiries, but you understand that as we have less than a thousand members, of which about only a hundred are English, lack of funds restricts its usefulness.

"I read that in England there is an expectation that after the war there will be something of a slump in industry. Well, the same thing will be certain in all other manufacturing countries, including Germany. Manufacturers will look round to discover scope for their energies. We have our own manufactures, and we must protect them by tariffs; but we all feel there is going to be a tremendous development of our natural resources, and millions upon millions' worth of goods will be required that our own manufactories cannot supply.

"It is plain we would rather have the aid of the Allies than that of the Germans, against whom hearts will be sore for many years. And if the British want to reap trading benefit from the friendship between the Allies they have got to move now. They must not wait till after the war. The Germans will then be back again reviving and improving their former machinery. British manufacturers and exporters should meet and decide on what vigorous action should be taken."

It is interesting that the first Chamber of Commerce in Russia, established six or seven years ago, was an association of English and Russian business men concerned in Anglo-Russian trade. What really brought it into being was the German competition, for the German-Russian, speaking the language of

the country, adaptive, ready to make rubbish if rubbish were required, as well as good articles, and giving long credit, was getting ahead much too fast to satisfy British merchants.

Germany had no need of a chamber of commerce in Russia; her agents and the banks saw that what was necessary in her commercial interests was done. Russia has never had any chambers of commerce of her own. The Bourse committees of all the important trading centres are the equivalents to our chambers of commerce at home, and act as intermediaries between the commercial community and the authorities.

The Russo-British Chamber of Commerce has now about 900 members, but, as Mr. Timiriazeff said, only about 100 of them live in England.

The starting of such a chamber immediately awoke other countries—except Germany, which did not need aid—with the consequence that during the last five years there have been established in Petrograd a Russo-French Chamber, a Russo-Italian, a Russo-Belgian, a Russo-Greek, and at Moscow a Russo-American Chamber of Commerce. Branches of the Russo-British Chamber were started at Odessa, the great wheat export harbour on the Black Sea, and at Warsaw, the capital of Poland.

But I see that the scope of the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce can be indefinitely expanded; it is on the spot and can be helpful to English members. Therefore, I have no hesitation in recommending it to English manufacturers interested in Russian

trade (address, 4 Gorochovaia, Petrograd). It is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Trade and Industry; it puts its English members into touch with suitable buyers and agents; it ascertains, under conditions, the standing of Russian firms, and it assists in translations. In 1914 over 5,000 inquiries were received and answered. The chief committee is composed of influential Russian and English business men, and there are sub-committees to deal with legal, mining, agricultural, and other matters. Mr. Henry Cooke, the Commercial Attaché at the British Embassy, when talking to me was generous in his praise of the service of the Chamber. The lately appointed Russian commercial attachés abroad sought its counsels before taking up their appointments, whilst the commercial attachés of other countries in Petrograd frequently consult it on matters not exclusively affecting Anglo-Russian trade interest. The Intelligence Department of the Russian Ministry of Commerce constantly makes use of its services in questions relating to trade between Russia and Britain, for which the Chamber receives a small subsidy of £100 a year. At times it is invited to send delegates to attend various Government commissions. All of which demonstrates it is increasingly appreciated in Russia. It needs to be better known in England.

The Chamber discusses the problems of international trade and ventilates trade grievances. Especially since the war came it has done excellent service in regard to measures before the Duma for

the amendment of the bankruptcy and company laws and for the prevention of the fictitious transfer of business undertakings and assets to evade the payment of liabilities—legislative measures in which British firms are closely interested, for they have been considerable sufferers from the existing lax state of the law. Since the war the work of the Chamber has enormously increased as a result of the numerous inquiries from firms all over Russia desiring, or compelled by existing circumstances, to replace German goods by British.

By its composition and membership the Chamber is more concerned with assisting Russians who trade with England, though there is not the slightest reason it should not become of greater use than it is in facilitating communication between British manufacturers and Russian traders. I visited the Chamber, and whatever shortcomings there were is due to small rooms and limited staff, for which the restricted income of the Chamber is responsible.

On general principles I am an opponent to subsidies; but here is a case where, until the British membership is augmented, it would be a good thing if some of our better-to-do chambers of commerce could see their way to make donations. I strongly urge that a representative of the Associated Chambers of Commerce be dispatched to Petrograd to study the situation and to report at home. Better still, a small commission of five members, live business men whose opinions would carry weight, by proceeding to Petrograd for a month, could render British com-

merce with Russia an incalculable service by delivering addresses to home chambers on their return.

The criticism that the Chamber is more Russian than British can be modified by British merchants themselves. Everyone who has trading relations should be a member, and thus increase the income and the range of its usefulness. Bigger premises are needed, and there should be a sample-room which, by charges for exhibition, ought to pay for itself. There is a library, much too crowded, and this ought to be supplemented by a catalogue-room.

When one knows of the splendid Schimmelpfeng bureau which exists at Berlin, with its threads of communication laid to every trade centre in Russia, so that the German exporter might obtain immediate information about the needs of the market, competitive prices, the stability of prospective customers, whilst London has been devoid of any organised machinery, I sometimes marvel that British manufacturers have succeeded in doing as well as they have. Anyway, steps ought to be taken to set up in London a Chamber of Russian Trade, which would be a co-operating instrument with the Chamber in Petrograd. Independent of this proposal, Mr. Henry Cooke favours the idea that the British Government should give financial help to the Petrograd Chamber, say, £500 a year, provisionally granted for a few years, though I personally believe that contributions from British Chambers of Commerce would be more effective and stimulate members to take interest in what is being done.

CHAPTER VII

AN IDLER IN THE CAPITAL

It is Sunday morning and the bells of St. Isaac's Cathedral have been busy since dawn.

The boom of the heavy bells, deep and sonorous, is impressive. The tone is like that of a man with a rich bass voice, and the mellow reverberations, quivering through the clean air, bring recollections to the idler—whilst he is sipping his early coffee—of far-off days in sultry Rangoon, when he joyed in listening to the wooden hammers making the huge bells of the Shway Dagohn pagoda sing—and Burma is a long way from Petrograd!

But the big chesty bells of St. Isaac's are always succeeded by the jingle-jangle of a tribe of whipper-snapper little bells, which clang and clatter in a frisky, impertinent, un-Sabbatarian and almost indecorous manner. Say it quickly: Wang-jang, tingle-lingle, jang-wang, bang-bang, whang-whang, tingle-ling, jang-wang—that is somehow the style they go. And as reminiscence is sprightly this morning, I find myself giving cadence and words to the rhyme, which is rather Eastern. I know I have heard it before. It was in a café in Cairo, where slim Egyptian girls with little on, swayed and swung and postured and jerked their

Photograph by Avanzo & Co., Petrograd

ST. ISAAC'S CATHEDRAL, PETROGRAD

lithe bodies in dances that are supposed to be improper.

Yes, those whipper-snapper bells of St. Isaac's—calling the faithful to prayer, I suppose—make a coffee-sipping world-wanderer, sitting at an hotel window across the square, smile in recollection that it was just to such a tune that by the banks of the Nile he has seen amorous young girls throw themselves about—and the Nile is a very long way from the Neva!

It is fitting that one goes to church. The black mass of domed St. Isaac's is inviting. Droshkies, with their fat and swaddled drivers, rattle across the cobbles. Also there is a little procession of maimed soldiers, hobbling on crutches and leaning on sticks, and with their arms in slings. Their cheeks have sun burnt sallowness upon them and their weak-coffee coloured service jackets of cotton are rather grimy. They are men scourged by the War. With several kindly faced nurses by their sides they are moving to the temple of peace to give thanks. Before the big doors is a double row of beggars, of the moudjik class mostly, brown as the steppes from which they have come; and they have little holy pictures on their breasts and little tin boxes in their hands, and they hope the worshippers in their goodness will contribute a few kopecks to assist them in their weary pilgrimage to Kiev in the south.

Outside, the air is laden with summer warmth. But the cavernous gloomy inside strikes chill. The

gilded altar shimmers with little facets in subdued illumination before the gleam of innumerable candles. There is the song of boy voices, the pungent aroma of incense, a throng of bearded ecclesiastics in gorgeous raiment—a picture which appeals to the imagination.

The congregation is immense, half in what is called European costume, half in Muscovite garb, but all of the lower middle class. In alcoves are pictures of saints, and before them are giant candelabra to which men and women bring their tapers, dozens of them, and they light them and set them to burn before the ikon of the saint whose intercession they need. They cross themselves many times, kneel on the pavement and cross themselves again, move forward and kiss the picture—oh, so reverently!—cross themselves once more and move away.

And a black-frocked verger is close by to remove the tapers and make room for the offerings of other worshippers before the shrine. The soldiers crawl forward, big, crippled men, and they stand in humbleness before the saints, bow their heads and pray.

In the dimmest of recesses a few candles flicker before an ikon. Crouching on the ground, with forehead on the pavement, is a woman in black. She crouches for a long time, the humblest little bundle of womanly sorrow in the world. She raises herself to her knees and her worn tear-stained face gazes abjectly at the ikon. She rises and kisses it; and then kneels and with arms across her bosom prays with closed eyes and then, crouching once more,

lies there very still. Is she praying for the soul of a man who had given his life for Russia on the field of battle?

There are no pews or chairs in a Russian church. The congregation is standing or kneeling. The rumble of a priest's voice reciting prayers is heard, and occasionally there is the shrill ring of a bell. On a platform is a bishop, black-bearded, and heavily mitred and with a heavy golden robe about him. On either side are white-bearded and richly robed patriarchs of the Church. Before the priest on the dais is a lad holding a huge open Bible, and minor priests hold sturdy candles whilst the bishop reads. Continuously the whole congregation bows, and everyone crosses himself three times.

The singing of the priests—is there anything in this world so majestic as the intoning by Russian priests? There is no organ, just the tremendous swell of powerful male voices. The chief singer is a monarch of a man, huge, with long flowing locks and long beard. He throws back his head and his voice thunders louder and louder, as I have never heard a voice before, until the mighty vault is full of song and the very walls seem to shake. What a voice, what a voice! Only I wished that when he was not singing he could have found something else to do than pick his nose.

I stood aside and pondered on the scene. This was the great church in Russia's great capital, and thousands were bending the knee and whispering in humbleness before the altar above which hung a

painting of the greatest of the Jews. The Russian does not like the Jew. He hates him because he fears him. He ostracises him and pens him and puts him under disabilities, and sometimes he rises in anger and kills him. But the soul of the Russian is stirred as he humbles himself before the chief of the Jews, and mothers and wives with their men at the front kiss the paintings of the mother of Christ and weep that she intercede for those whom they love.

It is really a very jolly Sunday luncheon party of which I am a member. The war news which has arrived is bad, but we try to forget it. The band plays and the restaurant is full of laughter. Many young officers are here, all merry but all limping. There is the salutation of superiors. All military men are wearing their orders, and there is no officer without at least one order. The Cossacks look splendid. One is wearing the Order of St. George—for bravery before the enemy. A well-known general arrives, and with him is a dainty frou-frou'd French actress with a reputation—it is only in Russia that such things are done so openly.

Ours is a purely British table. Of course we talk about the War. Then we talk about the soup, for Russia is the land of the perfect soup. No country makes such delicious soups as Russia. When you hear a lady exclaim: "I kiss my hand to the Russian soups," you will have to go to Russia to understand what she means.

One of the party indulges in a little whistle and

THE AUTHOR IN THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW

somebody says "Hush!"—for Russians never whistle. There is a superstition that it brings bad luck. If you are light-hearted enough to whistle in the street and a gendarme hears you, he will command you to cease. "I was coming out of the club," said a man, "and I was whistling, and a priest who was passing made the sign of the Cross before me."

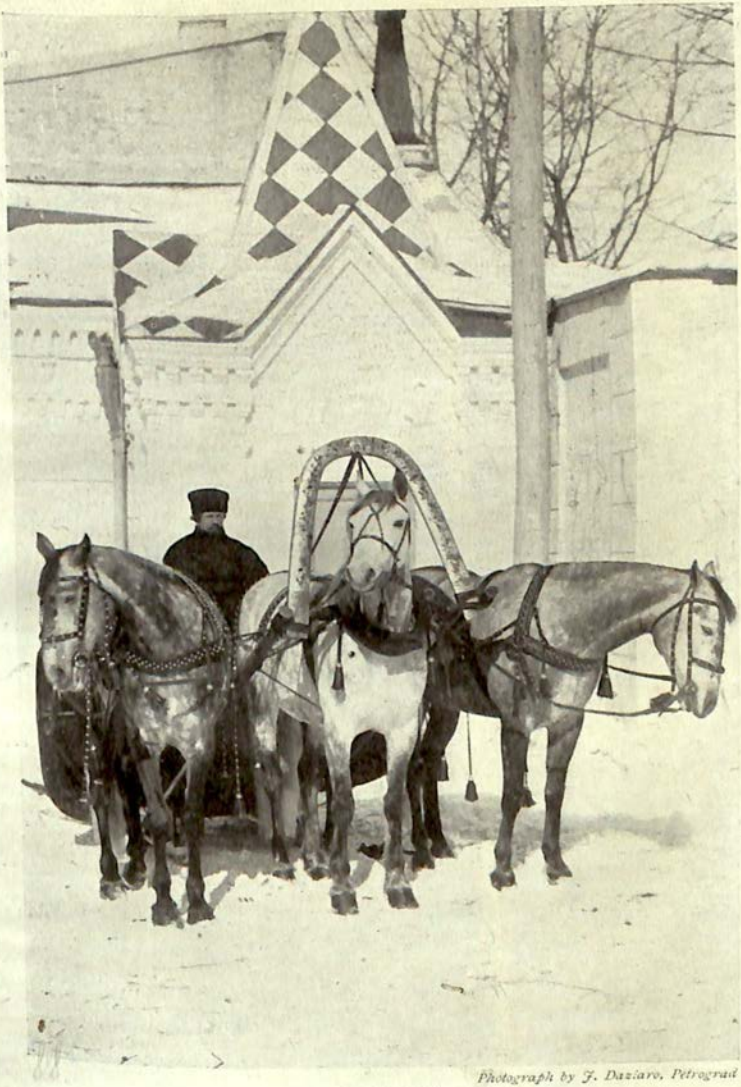
Some friends had come up from Moscow and we discussed Russian travelling. It is cheap, sometimes clean and often comfortable. First-class carriages on the railways are painted blue, second-class chocolate, third-class yellow, and fourth-class green. On all the night trains in Russia there is sleeping accommodation for all classes—from the reserved *coupé* for the first-class passengers to the bare wooden shelves for the fourth-class—and we agree that other countries have much to learn from Russia.

But we all execrate the droshki driver. So far, there is only one class of the Russian community whose necks I daily desired to assist in breaking. These are the droshki drivers with their carriages like bath-chairs made for two. The gentleman has a hat like an old-fashioned beaver, cut down in the crown and with a scoop of the wings like a sauce-boat. He wears a combination coat and skirt, heavily quilted and padded with cotton wool until he is blown out like the buffoon in a music-hall acrobatic troupe. He lives in this cloak, summer and winter, he sleeps in it, and I hope to goodness that he dies in it and that it is buried with him.

Compared with the Petrograd *ichvorshik* the London taxi-driver has the virtues of a rural dean. On the "back of the front" of his vehicle are the regulation prices—but though it is war-time the illustrated papers ought to find room for the portrait of a droshki driver who ever came within range of his proper fare. Nobody ever thinks of jumping into a droshki and paying about right at the end of the journey. Four times as much as is legitimate would be demanded, and if it is not forthcoming you are followed into your residence or hotel and you learn the tremendous scope of the Russian language in hot invective.

You have to bargain. When I went out and approached the droshki rank I had a sort of Dutch auction. I shouted that I wanted to go to the British Embassy. A hirsute ruffian suggests two roubles. Neit! Another blackmailer smirks that he'll take me for one rouble fifty kopecks. Neit! Then one rouble is grunted by somebody up the line. Neit! "Skolko?" (How much are you willing to give?) is asked by a fellow with a pock-marked face and a swollen stomach. I offer sixty kopecks. He is willing to take me for seventy, and the bargain is concluded.

There are no regulation luncheon or dining hours in Russia, and therefore the dining-rooms of the best hotels never have that smart appearance which you find in a first-rate London hotel in the evening. If there is a dinner-party everybody will be in evening dress; but more likely than not people at the adjoining



Photograph by J. Dazzaro, Petrograd

A TROIKA

tables are in the same dress that they wear at luncheon. If you see a couple of young fellows enter a restaurant in dinner jackets, the chances are nineteen to one they are Englishmen.

Everybody shakes hands with everybody else. If you are sitting in a club you mustn't be surprised if a perfect stranger comes forward and shakes hands with you. You see the head waiter in a restaurant wander round shaking hands with visitors, which is not the English way, but it appears rather democratic. A place I dined at several times is the Restaurant of Amalgamated Waiters, which explains itself. It is run on the co-partnership plan amongst a group of waiters, better class waiters, who look after you well, for the food is good and it is cheaper than at some of the more swagger places, where the prices are invariably higher than those of New York.

A Russian restaurant is quite a delightful place. In a tank at the entrance swim the fish which you wish to have served up in half an hour and you make your selection and the finny is netted. You smoke cigarettes (*paperos*) before dining and after the meal, and if it happens to be a birthday party, or any occasion which provides the excuse, there is interminable speech-making and health-drinking between the courses. When the coffee is served, it is quite the proper thing to kiss the hand of your hostess in acknowledgment of her hospitality. Indeed, kissing plays a prominent part in social relations. Men kiss each other if they are related or friends who are overjoyed at meeting each other. Women always

seem on the look out for a chance to kiss each other. Men kiss the hands of married women, but in correct circles they do not kiss the hands of unmarried ladies.

In private life many of the best of Russian families live an ascetic life. The meats are scraggy, the tablecloth not always the cleanest, and any old dishes will do. But let there be a party—my! Then everything that is sumptuous and expensive is to the front. For the Russian is ostentatious and hospitable, and it would hurt him to the bone if he failed in creating a good impression. I have had it whispered in my ear that when Russian ladies are "not at home" there is a slackness, an easy nonchalance about the way they dress which the average English lady, unless she were a dowd, would never fall into.

But meet a Russian lady when she is "at home" and there is no more delightfully dressed or better conversational dame in the world. Russian ladies have got no complexions; so they do not powder. Truth and not gallantry compels me to say they are all colourless, except a kind of clayey drab. This is not to be wondered at when one remembers the Russian abhorrence of fresh air. It is seldom you ever see a window open. No attention is ever paid to ventilation. The air is dead and to an Englishman often repulsive. Sometimes I have travelled hours standing in the corridor of a railway train, for the carriages were offensive through non-ventilation, and I could not ask for the window to be opened

without being thought either mad or rude. Once, during winter time, in a foul, stinking dining-room, I tore open a double window—it had been puttied up to prevent a thread of air entering—and there was almost a riot. I do not want to boast, and therefore I admit I was worsted; the window was closed and I had to console myself with making myself doubly unpopular with my remarks on "the seven-and-twenty smells, all well-defined genuine stinks."

Of course one has to remember that Russia belongs to the Russians, and if they prefer foul air it is really the business of the visiting foreign minority to fall in with the customs. But we must be allowed to smile. The better-class Russian manipulates his knife and fork in the accepted manner of Western nations. But get down to the middle-class and then you find idiosyncrasies that are marvellous. It is not so much the agility with which half a knife blade can disappear into a moving mouth—one has witnessed that performance in other lands—but the way the fork is gripped with tight fist, driven into the food as though it were a piece of writhing German trying to escape; and there is a juggle between knife and fork, ending in the fork being clasped between the first and second fingers, prongs down, and then fork and knife engaged in swift struggle. The Russian gets his face near to his food and sprawls his elbows whilst feeding himself; and if he offers you a remark knife and fork are pointed upwards whilst he addresses you. The Russian has many excellent qualities, but his table manners are different from those we are

accustomed to at home. I suppose Russians visiting England have some crisp comments to make on the extraordinary habits of English folk.

Some of us have arranged for an afternoon of boating on an arm of the Neva. We are off to the suburb of Christovskai. On the broad Neva are dancing many pleasure steamers. The day is fine and all Petrograd and his wife are bent to have a jaunt on the water. Crowds are on the floating piers ready to jump on the fat and churning boats prepared to take them to their favourite haunt. We jump on our boat which bobs her way past the glittering spires of Peter and Paul. Away on one side is the soft blue dome of a mosque which the Moslems in Petrograd have erected. Private launches cut by with impertinence in their manner. Sounds of a band come from the Narodny Dom, a kind of People's Palace, very popular with the crowd and where an endless round of entertainment and instruction can be got for ten kopecks (twopence-halfpenny).

There are mighty barges which have sluggishly floated down stream for hundreds of miles bringing timber from the forests to provide fuel for the capital during the winter months.

Our steamer swings out of the main channel along a reach by the side of which are pleasant riverside houses. Groups of friends are gathered on the verandas and under the trees, and the yell of the gramophone sounds loud. We land and walk through pleasant ways, where there are neat country cottages

The Czarevitch

THE CZAREVITCH AND HIS BOY FRIENDS BOATING

and fields in which sturdy young Russians are playing football and reach the châlet of a friend where there is tea.

So to the Arrow Club, English in its origin, most of the members English, with a boat-house as excellent as most on the banks of the Thames and with all the boats Putney-built and bearing English names—"Bluebottle," Dragonfly," and the like.

We are in Russia, but this seems like a bit of the old country. There are young fellows who have been having spins in their outriggers and are now eager for their shower bath. We soon get a boat and are away through a pretty piece of wooded country with delicious backwaters which are private, and we catch glimpses of delightful houses. There are hundreds of boats out, of all sorts and with all sorts of oarsmen and oarswomen. There are folk dressed for the river and there are those togged out as though they had originally intended going to a garden party, and there are soldiers with their girls, and crews of young fellows rowing badly, but very happy and singing splendidly.

The way opens and we are amongst the islands. Thousands of folks are lolling by the banks. There are other thousands bathing, yes, thousands, whole families and concourses of young men and bunches of young women all splashing in the water and as joyous as nymphs, and everyone in what artists call "the altogether." At no seaside resort in England, not even Blackpool, are there so many bathers to be seen as there are this late Sunday after-

noon disporting by the edge of the islands which breast upon the Gulf of Finland.

There is a great calm. We make right out to the broad waters of the sea. Sailing boats rest lazily, for there is not a puff of wind. To look back at Petrograd recalls pleasant times on the lagoon with Venice in the distance. There are many points of difference, but two men in the boat remarked how similar the scene was to Venice on a luscious summer evening. We go as far as the lightship where there is peace and the mist of evening is gathering far away. We smoke and talk about many things and forget there is a war somewhere on the earth.

The journey back is long. Over the waters come song and the world is beautiful. The falling sun catches the gilt cupolas of the Petrograd churches. And when we have hauled the boat back into the boathouse of the Arrow Club there is dinner waiting us at the house of our English friends.

Back to Petrograd by tramcar, and what a crush! There was not even standing-room, not even hanging-on room. We got wedged on the driver's platform among a group of soldiers—as happy a holiday throng as anywhere. Along avenues we scudded, clanged up broad roads, dashed over the Neva bridge and were deposited at the corner of the Nevski, and the great street was crowded with pedestrians enjoying the cool of the summer evening.

One more experience: we must go to a kinema show. The "pictures" are just as popular in Petrograd as in London or New York or Sydney

or Paris. We have difficulty in getting seats and we pay twice as much as we would in London. Of course there are the usual American films; the Transatlantic dramas are pronounced "Anglichani" by the Russians who fail to know the difference.

But the Russian likes strong meat. Merely amusing pictures leave him cold. There was a film of the career of "A Daughter of Joy" which would not have been passed by the Censor in England. There was a sad love drama. The Russians will not have a happy ending. They adore a mournful ending where the young lady has to marry the man she hates and the real lover cuts his throat with a razor at the marriage feast and writhes on the floor before he expires with the bride on her knees sobbing upon his breast. The Russian glories in murder in the "pictures." He and she turns up his or her nose at the sentimental journeys-end-in-lovers-meeting sort of film which is popular in other countries. The manager of a film firm told me it was usual to have two endings, one gruesome for Russia and one happy for elsewhere.

Petrograd goes to bed late. It is near twelve o'clock and the main streets are still full of folk, but thinning. The packed electric cars race along like streaks of light. Automobiles grunt their hoarse challenge for everybody to get out of the way. Droshkies clatter along. Midnight booms and St. Isaac's Cathedral is wrapt in gloom. And far away the Great War is being waged.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RUSSIAN MAN OF BUSINESS

SURELY there never was so agreeable a business man as the Russian. He would never think of hustling you. He brings an exquisite philosophy into daily life, and if things are not done now, is there not the full stretch of eternity during which they can advance to accomplishment?

He accepts the old saw that time was made for slaves. Time should be pleasant, and what has a man gained if he worries himself to an early demise? The Russian looks with more wonder than admiration on the impetuous foreigner who always wants to finish something in order to start something else. You can always tell the Englishman in Petrograd; he lacks the sedateness which characterises the Russian.

You know the procedure of an ordinary commercial establishment in England or America—how the managers and superiors and clerks move about with an alacrity which would suggest that an invisible but trenchant knout was playing about their shoulders—well, sometimes they do!

Drop into the office of a great business concern in Russia, and the main thing which will impress you is its repose. There is no liveliness as though there were a mail to be caught. Perhaps you will see a

greybeard slowly writing. Other employees will be leaning back in their chairs gossiping, whilst one may be performing manicure operations, and another, peering into a miniature reflecting glass, will be trimming his moustache with a tiny pair of scissors. Nearly everybody is puffing at the dainty paperos composed of cardboard tubing, with a wad of wool to check the nicotine, and an infinitesimal quantity of tobacco. It would be unjust to criticise the Russian clerk having a cigarette during business hours, for he can plead it is "such a small one, sir," like the servant girl when reproved by a clergyman on a certain occasion. You can puff fifty of these cigarettes in a day and still be thought a moderate smoker.

The attendant is constantly entering with glasses of amber-hued tea on trays. It is delicious and refreshing, especially if it has a slice of lemon in lieu of milk. It keeps the head clear. During your stay in Russia you have come to like it yourself. So people sip tea and puff cigarettes and discuss the War and the lady with the diamonds who sings at the Aquarium, and now and then a little business is done.

From one corner comes a clitter-clatter. It is the cashier making up his accounts on a *tchotte*. As a very small boy, I remember we had a thing like this in the nursery, coloured beads on pieces of wire within a frame, so we youngsters might learn to count. Exactly the same thing is used in all Russian business houses. I saw it in use in my hotel, and I saw it in use in the English bank where I presented my letter of credit. The Russian cannot

count without the *tchotte*. A Russian jerks the beads to find out what is the total of 2, 2, and 1! It is a nice instrument and useful, for the Russian can tot up an enormous string of figures with a rapidity and accuracy that cannot be surpassed by the most expert of London banking clerks.

Two Russians are to do business: shall we say one desires to fix up a contract for furnishing a building with electric lighting appliances and the other has the decision? There is no brutal jumping to the point with swift haggling over terms and then agreeing on the price, a pushful method which more Western nations consider to be smart. Compared with the Russian there is a lack of courteous decorum about the British way.

Ah, they are so pleased to see each other. "And how is madame and the children? Have a paperos —and it must be nice to get into the country each evening during the summer months, and we've taken so many more thousands of German prisoners. The electric lighting appliances: yes, of course. But come along to the Hotel France, and let us lunch together."

They go off and eat and talk long over their coffee. To-morrow they will meet and decide. On the morrow they meet again and are so pleasant. But it is impossible to do anything just now; there was a man to be seen and consulted, and he has gone to Moscow; but he'll be back in a few days. Au revoir; details can be discussed in three or four days. In a few days there is another visit; the

Photograph by Avanzo & Co., Petrograd

THE NEVSKI PROSPECT, PETROGRAD

other has gone out with some friends; it is not expected he will return to-day. But he is found in a café sipping tea and reading the *Novoe Vremya*. A polite rebuke. Ah! He never telephoned saying he had not seen the man who must be consulted, because he had no idea the other would be keeping the appointment. So it goes on, with indecision and patience playing a long drawn-out game with each other. Nobody complains; it is the easy custom of the country. And they are so nice about it all.

The foreigner who runs into Petrograd thinking he can fix up a contract in a day—everything has been arranged by correspondence and there only remains the signing of the papers—bangs into the most velvety snag in the world. He is not stopped, but he does not seem to be getting on. There is so much hospitality that there is little time for talking business. Besides, he did not know the documents had to go before certain high officials, and they are so busy; delay is regrettable, but it is a pleasant day. If he is inclined to be irritable he is disarmed by the charming manners of the Russians. He may grunt things to himself when dressing in his room, but what can be said to people who are so considerate, so willing to help, whose main desire it is to facilitate matters?—only the facilitation takes a precious long time in coming to a head.

What a couple of Englishmen or Americans will decide in twenty minutes' talk, Russians will walk round for the better part of a fortnight. Men go to Russia bursting with giant propositions. Nobody

stops them; everybody agrees they would be splendid for Russia. But one morning the hustler gets into the train with his face set homewards, having accomplished nothing at all. He has failed to learn the axiom concerning one's conduct in Rome.

Russia is the land of plenty of time. And the Russian has the common weakness of frail humanity in that he likes money, but he likes a good time better. Every country pats itself on the back and commends its own warm-heartedness; so that wherever the vagrant writing man goes he hears (according to where he is) about true Irish hospitality and characteristic Canadian hospitality and real Yorkshire hospitality, Australian hospitality and New Zealand hospitality, whereas good fellows are much like other good fellows all over the world—but the Russian gets ahead of all in "doing the visitor proud."

Unlike some of the inhabitants of newer lands, he never pumps into you what a splendid country Russia is. In these days of war when enthusiasm is pardonable, the modesty of the Russians is an example. They are depressed when things are not satisfactory, but when things go well they take it all as a matter of course. And the Russian brings this trait into his business. If in a burst of British candour you express your opinion on the leisurely way business is done in Russia and denounce it as "blank slow," the Russian admits you are quite right, and is sorry there is not more alacrity; he is depressed. He has not learned the art of advertisement or the booming of antique dictionaries

so that even the wideawake are mesmerised into purchase.

As for paying in cash, except for smaller things, that is quite an un-Russian idea. He gives a bill, and he has it renewed, and he borrows money on a new bill to pay the old bill until you feel that half the business population of Russia is living in a cyclone of bills. The banks do a great trade—indeed, it may be said to be the main trade—discounting bills. Of course, the creditor would like cash, but as that is an unheard-of thing, he takes a bill—he prefers a bill at three or six months to the expectation of being paid in a month when he sends in his account. The recovery of a debt in a court of law—well, it takes as long as things usually take in Russia. But if a bill is not met or renewed at the specified time the arm of judgment comes down swiftly.

The Russian *can* accomplish things with haste, but that is when he has been contaminated by American or English experience. The average Muscovite is dignified in transacting business, not because he cannot be quick, but simply because it is not the fashion of the country. He, like the rest of us, is the result of his environment. Business starts later than in England, and generally ends earlier; and there are several entr'actes during the day.

Organisation is a device which the Russian regards as a foreign invention. He admires it enormously; in some establishments you actually see evidence of it. The card index system is most ingenious, and in some places it is used for quite

six weeks at a stretch. One day a Russian (with foreign training) was telling me of his efforts to induce the management of the Petrograd municipal tramways to have a better organised service. There was no official retort that it was a good service. It was admitted it ought to be better, that in the middle of the day there should be more cars running through the centre of the city and not so many empty cars penetrating the environs. Yes, there ought to be organisation—and the cars jangled round in much the old way.

It is astounding the manner the English business man can speed along. The Russian likes it, and agrees that Russian business men—other business men—should try to imitate and move more quickly. But England is England and Russia is Russia. Rising early in the morning, down to the works by eight o'clock, and most of the correspondence dictated before ten, interviews with managers, negotiating with representatives of other firms, attending a company meeting, having a snack of a luncheon, a conference in the afternoon, and then dine with a man so that business may be debated over a cigar—the whirlwind gives the Russian a headache. He is not an early-to-bed-early-to-rise man. He likes to go to the gardens and see an outdoor opera and listen to the band, and at midnight have supper at a *café chantant* and be hospitable and admire the indifferent French singers. The Russian is easily pleased. He is enraptured about artists at the Aquarium or the Bouffe who would not have much of a chance at a third-rate variety show in the suburbs of London.

You rarely hear of a Russian business man needing a rest cure because his nerves have gone to pieces through excessive strain. In his way, however, he gets quite as much fun out of life as the commercialist of other lands. If you could probe into his soul, you would find a poet and a dreamer, and poetry and dreaming are hostages to fortune in the modern world of money-making. Some Russians are very rich—you find them chiefly at Moscow, manufacturing things for the peasantry, and nine-tenths of Russia's population are peasants—but it cannot be alleged that the Russian business man is hungering to make a fortune. By his method of trade—a curve, and not a direct attack—his money comes easily, and he lets it depart just as easily.

He is an agreeable man to do business with if you remember you are in Russia. His outlook on life is idealistic, and it is rare that you run into the hard-knuckled materialist. He is the antithesis to the American business man. The American is out to make money, and at the back of his head are ideals. The Russian keeps his ideals fresh, and it is his spare time that he gives to making money.

It is this which makes it so difficult for the commercial man of the West to get along with the Muscovite. He likes the Russian qualities, but complains of his slowness, whereas he is just different. Maybe the idea of slowness is encouraged by the fact that the Russian calendar is thirteen days behind our own. When it is July 1st in England, it is only June 18th in Russia.

CHAPTER IX

THE RUSSIANS

THE Russians are an emotional, unsettled people. As their ancestors were nomads, so the modern Russians are prone to wandering either physically or mentally—and there is no race less conservative in the recognition of fresh trends of thought. In many ways they are as advanced as the most go-ahead Western, and in other ways there is a strange, almost eerie Orientalism in their character.

It is a romantic idea that the Russian is pure Slav. When Russia first came into history it was about one-fifth the size it is to-day. It was surrounded by Finnish and Turanian races. As Russia expanded these races did not disappear; they were absorbed, and to-day in different parts of the Empire you see varying types, sometimes fair and Northern, sometimes tawny and Eastern, which tell of the mixture of blood.

For two hundred years the Mongols ruled and dominated Russia, and the people were gradually influenced, until to-day there are many customs which are national but which came from the East. In China I have seen the merchant making up his accounts by the manipulation of beads on wires. As I have said, you cannot go into a bank in Moscow

or a store without hearing the rattle of the beads on the *tchotte*, whilst salesmen are reckoning the total of a customer's purchases. In Western China, at Chung-king-fu, I have heard the whir of the watchman's rattle giving all good people abed warning that they are being looked after—and incidentally also giving warning to any thieves that may be about that a constable is at hand. I have been in the country house of a Russian friend near Moscow, and have been awakened at dead of night by the rattle of the watchman whilst making his rounds. It is the habit of most Russian men to wear an overcoat when out of doors; it makes the foreigner smile that even on a broiling midsummer day the Russian is to be seen in the streets wearing an overcoat. It is a custom distinctly Tartar, amongst whom it has always been considered indecorous to appear in public without the lower part of the body being well hidden. Many Russians shave the head; so do the Tartars. In the prison houses of Siberia I have seen hundreds of criminals with one side of their head shaven, so they would be more easily recognised if they attempted to escape. Many words in common use in Russia are taken from Tartar languages. Besides, you frequently come across castes of feature, slightly oblique eyes, slightly raised cheek bones, which suggest a Tartar ancestor.

The facility with which the Russian can acquire a new language suggests an inborn capability, which I believe was developed in the hazy past when the Russians were nomads, and were constantly coming

into contact with other races and acquiring their speech. Beneficially influenced by contact with the West, the Slavs wandered eastward when the power of the Mongols was broken. Indeed, it was the migratory habits of the peasantry, wandering over the land in great numbers, entirely forsaking one district after settling for a year or so, that was the cause of serfhood, the compulsory fixing of the peasants to the soil in their own district. Nomadism was so much in the blood that the chaining of people to particular districts had the effect of killing them off. One of the arguments put forward for the emancipation of the serfs in the later 'fifties was, that if the peasant population was to be saved from dwindling they must be allowed to resume their old natural habits of migration.

To understand this restlessness in the people will help us further to understand the restlessness there is in religious matters—Russia is the land of nonconformity—and the feverishness in regard to politics. Like other Western friends of Russia I would like to see a more democratic system of government than that which prevails; but whatever form of government be set up in Russia, the same churning, dissatisfied, impatient movements will be found.

To-day the Russian is a wanderer. I am not thinking of the individual in society who seeks pleasure in whatever European capitals or spas happen to be fashionable. The ordinary business Russian is constantly travelling. No trains in Europe are so crowded as the Russian trains. The

Photograph by Avanzo & Co., Petrograd

BAND OF WANDERING WORKMEN

mir (the village commune) did much to bring back the wanderer to look after his bit of land. Recent land legislation, providing the moudjiks with individually-owned plots, has also done a great deal in fastening them to the land. But the young men are constantly moving to some other part of the country where they get better pay, or they emigrate to Siberia, about which they hear as wonderful tales as the English peasantry hear about Canada. There is a huge influx into Siberia; and also there is a considerable exodus from Siberia, not because it is not a profitable land—in agricultural potentialities it is the twin country to Canada—but just because the people are restless.

There are numbers of bands of artisans who spend a considerable part of the year travelling from town to town doing work. Peasants constantly move into the big towns to become droshki-drivers or mill hands, and then when they have had a few months of town life away they go back to their villages.

When the Russian cannot find any other reason for wandering he makes a pilgrimage. The farther he has to go, the better he seems to like it. In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem I have stood aside and watched bands of long-travelled and worn Russian pilgrims crawling on their knees to kiss what they believed to be the most precious slab of stone in the world. In the catacombs at Kiev I have slowly jostled a way amongst hundreds of pilgrims. It is the most common thing in Russia, whether at Petrograd or Odessa, Samara or Astrakan, to meet working men hundreds, even thousands

of miles from their homes. One of the results of this constant wandering and intermingling is, that in one way the country is unique. Russia is a land without dialects. The Yorkshire man and the Somersetshire man, the Durham man and the Cockney would have difficulty in understanding each other. There are no such dialects in Russia.*

Then, as the Russians never have any settled hour for any meal, it almost suggests a survival of nomadic times when the wanderers fed whenever it suited them. Of course, in the principal cities Western practices are usual; but get the slightest way off the beaten track and you run into customs which proclaim the nomadic life. Arrive at a country hotel, and it is nine chances to one no sheets or pillows are provided. The Russian is expected to carry these with him; but the plan of not providing would not be common unless it was the custom of the Russians to travel much. The old rule prevails in the Russian railway sleeping cars, for after you have paid for your sleeping place, unless you produce your own linen, the conductor will charge you a rouble for a supply. Then again, when you get off the beaten track you learn that if you desire to wash it is unusual to find a basin; there is a tap, and you wash in running water. Russians mostly wash in running water, a distinct survival of the Tartars, who would never think of washing in still water.

* The pronunciation of o is not always the same. The differences in speech between Great Russians and Little Russians are not those of dialect.

Further, the fact that for its enormous population Russia has comparatively few towns, and very few of these can throw off the resemblance to overgrown villages, is accounted for by the people being roamers, and also, to a considerable extent, I believe, accounts for the liberty-loving characteristics of the people; whilst the wide dispersal has prevented much concerted action on the part of the people. The first makings of a town were no more than a camp. *Gorod*, as in Novgorod, means an enclosure. More than half the people in England live in towns; more than nine-tenths of the people in Russia live in purely agricultural districts. It would be difficult to name more than a dozen cities in Russia with a population over 50,000. Town life does not suit the Russian. The death rate in Moscow is greater than the birth rate, and the increase in the population of the old capital is entirely due to immigration. So far as statistics can be obtained to guide one, there is no reason for believing that the urban population of Russia has increased during the last thousand years.

The Russian's chief delight is to get back to primitive conditions, to live in a wood in a *datcha*, usually a cottage made out of rough-hewn logs. There are imposing buildings in Russia, and the salons of some of the nobility are spacious. But when left to himself the Russian prefers a small room. The Emperor when at his country palace of Tsarkoe Selo does not live in the palace, but in a modest building no bigger than the house of an English

country gentleman of quite moderate means—in the park which surrounds the palace.

The absence of town life means an absence of stimulus. It is rarely you hear of an association of men interested in scientific and literary pursuits. I have never come across, and I have never heard of, any Russian with a scientific hobby. In all business there is Orientalism—the asking for more than you expect, the offering of less than you are willing to give. In all transactions the inclination is to make a little "on the side." I would not like to say there are not men in other countries just as corrupt as many that are to be found in Russia; but in Russia it is more accepted that if you want an official to do his duty without dilatoriness, the best way is to make him a present—a custom that is universal in the East.

Like every other nation, the Russians have traits which are the consequence of the kind of land in which they live. Though there are little groups of families in the villages—the Russian, though a countryman, has never adopted ranch life such as it exists in America—and though there is constant individual migration, the enormous distances which separate the groups have hindered anything in the nature of co-operation in the past; though in quite recent years considerable success has attended the agricultural co-operative movement, and has tended to throw the Russian [illegible] on himself and make him introspective and moody; the eternal featureless steppes—you can travel a thousand miles and never

notice the slightest difference in the landscape: endless plains and melancholy woods—has affected the temperament of the people.

The Russian has a few months of glorious, exhilarating weather, and then, almost in the twinkling of an eye, the land is covered with long, sad winter. That is just like the Russian himself. There are times when he is as gay, frolicsome, and as irresponsible as a schoolboy, and then he has long stretches of dourness.

Such a land influences man toward the supernatural, toward religion; and in a blind, earnest way there is no man more naturally religious than the Russian. The climate makes him reflective. The monotony of the landscape has affected the literature of the country. But as the country is wide and expansive, so is the Russian in his views of life. He is never mean or petty. There is something impressively big about the generosity and toleration with which he regards the world. In the country parts of other lands the villagers are heavy, loutish, dull-witted, and the people are narrow. That type is non-existent in Russia. The moudjik may be illiterate, he may be steeped in absurd superstition, but he always has an intelligent countenance; and when he talks with you it is with alertness.

Physically, and as a nation, the Russians are the finest-made men in the world. Both men and women—especially amongst the peasant class—have splendid teeth. I have never been able to discover the secret of the perfection of Russian teeth, but

have an idea that it is partly due to the small quantity of meat and the great quantity of black bread they eat. The colour of complexions is not good in Russia, ascribable to the hard, dry climate; but the folk have a dignity of carriage and a free courtesy of manner which always win admiration. Their hospitality is spontaneous. And amongst the things to be noticed is the modesty of the people; they never boast—never.

Russia to-day is the outcome of harsh Mongolian rule, subservience to the autocracy of the Greek Church, and a passionate instinct for freedom—the relic of nomadic times. So, whilst the outer world thinks of the harshness of Russia toward the individual, Russia, as distinct from the government of the country, is always vigorous in the championship of individual rights.

It is a phenomenon that, whilst the Slav loves freedom, he should be under the most autocratic rule. The explanation is that whilst freedom is a racial characteristic, the government is a direct continuation of the system when the Tartars had possession. Whenever given an opportunity to develop on their own lines, the Russians move toward brotherhood in its widest sense.

We have heard of bands of folk in Western lands forming communal colonies, living the simple life, sharing in common: and all the endeavours have ended in failure. But in autocratic Russia the sharing in common has been in practice for centuries. The *mir* was a village commune; the land was held

joint possession under direction of elders, and all worked for the general interest. It is the inflow of Western ideas which is breaking down the brotherly spirit behind the *mir*, and on the principle that victory should go to the strong, the move is toward individual ownership.

Something like this had to come, for whilst the possessions of the *mir* remained the same, the population increased and shares decreased. So young men had to be turned out to battle for themselves, and, succeeding, put thoughts into the minds of the strongest who remained behind, that they would do better if they toiled for their own family instead of for the family of the village.

You can draw a thick, straight, unindented line between the overlord government of the autocracy and the truly democratic government by the people in their lesser affairs. For as the rights of the individual are a growth from the old tribal communism, so the desire for more public control in national affairs is the fruit of the recognition that it is the duty of the individual to concern himself with the welfare of the individuals who compose the community.

Here, again, one strikes another phenomenon of Russia. Whilst the masses consider autocracy unfitted for their present state, and desire more democratic rule, they are gradually abandoning the field to which democracy is often, but erroneously, supposed to lead—namely, communism. It is not for me to raise any defence of the autocratic method of

government; but however much it fails in administration, it is benevolent in intention, and—trying to look at the whole thing with a judicial mind—one can appreciate that many of the tempestuous outbursts which Russia has had to face have not been so much due to the repression of the autocracy as to the passionate demand for freedom on the part of the people. We are shocked by the manner in which the uprisings are subdued; also, sometimes, we are disposed to confuse the causes which provoked the uprisings with the terrible punishments which are consequent.

It is seen how fascinating is the study of the consciousness of Russia beneath its development. It is occasionally called a land of contrasts; and so it is. Had Russia ever developed a body of great national leaders—her history is strangely deficient of such men—her place amongst the nations of the world would have been very different from what it is to-day.

But the more you understand the Russian character as demonstrated through the centuries, the more you are forced to a pained acceptance of the fact that Russia is deficient in will power. Her ideals are noble; the individual Russian has in the heart of him the most generous impulses. But Russia has not produced leaders. The scattered, vagrant population will partly account for this. And she has always yielded to the will power of other races. She was leading the fraternal pastoral life when the Greek Church came along and imposed a

MOUDJIKS

church government which the people could not resist. The Mongols came, exercised dominant power, and taught the Russian chiefs how to check the peasantry, to cow them, to keep them in vassalage. So the present system of government, the exercise of power, is an alien product, and is not representative of Russia. I am far from arguing there should be a holus-bolus rearrangement. My own belief is that if free political rein were given to Russia there would be tragedy, and not improvement; for idealism would outstrip practicality—and we live in a practical and not in an ideal world.

When you proceed—and it is easy enough—to direct the finger at the vices for which Russia is notorious, you have to keep in recollection that whilst she owes the foreigner much for her advancement, it is also the foreigner who is responsible for every debasement. One knows how there is a great awakening of the Russian spirit—one prays it may be well directed—and though the founder of Petrograd, Peter, is sometimes called "the Great," and was no doubt actuated by laudable motives, his passion for foreign institutions, which he ruthlessly enforced on the people, did not facilitate but retarded national development. It was he who, inheriting an Asiatic rule, grafted on to what he conceived to be Western civilization. The receptive Slav was eager for the improvement. Since Peter's time, Germany, France, and England have exercised influence on the aspirations of the people. But an Asiatic inheritance, wedded to European enlighten-

ment, did not count for peace in Russia. It accentuated the restlessness of the Slav temperament. It was teaching the bird to fly and cooping him in a cage. It made him recall his early days of freedom. We are told that "East is east and West is west," and that never the twain can meet. But they have met in Russia, though they have not coalesced, and that is one of the principal causes of political ferment in the realm of the Czar.

The more enlightened Russia became—saturated with the literature, the science, and the philosophy of neighbouring countries, and the ferment began to work—the more tightly did autocracy tighten the bolts of its authority.

At times there has been stray action taken to stem foreign influence because of its unsettling effect. Many good Russians, zealous for the well-being of their land, have nevertheless resisted the power of the foreigner. Two heavy streams of opinion have collided: that of the Slavophils or Nationalists, and that of the Zapadniki or Westerns. Those parties exist to-day. You will find the strength of the Zapadniki in Petrograd, and the force of the Slavophils in Moscow. The war has given an impetus to the Slavophils. It has in innumerable ways directed attention to how Russia has been dependent on foreign co[illegible] There has grown up, not an anti-foreign feeling, but a vigorous pro-Russian feeling, which is vented in the repeated declarations that Russia must be self-dependent, must be more practical and less dreamy, must

advance not by modelling itself on alien institutions, but by developing itself on Russian lines.

As is usual in all great wars, there have been grave allegations, recriminations, misunderstandings; but in this war, which makes it distinct from all other wars in which Russia has been engaged, the whole country, and all those in it, the revolutionaries as well as the most unflinching supporters of the autocracy, are animated by the same wholesome spirit. If that spirit will prevail after the war, if there will be the same single-mindedness to elevate Russia as there is to overthrow Germany, Russia will have embarked on a blessed evolution.

Those who believe that the new salvation for Russia will be on British, American, or even on German lines make a mistake. Russia has taken mental nutriment from the West because she has not been sufficiently grown to forage for herself. Wherever she has foraged she has done well. Russia is like a great baby grown into a giant, whilst still suckling at a foreign breast. There have long been indications of the giant, conscious of strength, unable to direct it, but quite sure he needs no more suckling. That in the heart of Russia there is a tremendous force—though the will-power to which I have referred has been a latent quality—which one day, not long distant, will reveal itself, I verily believe. But as the Russians themselves are only dimly conscious of the lines of their own future it would be mere speculation for a foreigner to attempt to indicate them—except that they will be Slavophil and not Western.

We must try to realise what the Slav temperament is. I have already referred to its idealism and its dislike of restraint. But we have to go deeper if we would understand better. In reading a Russian novel or listening to Russian music you know that the principal note is melancholy. When Pushkin read Gogol's "Dead Souls" he exclaimed, "My God, how sad our Russia is!"

There is mirth to be found in Russia, but it is artificial and not natural. The real Russian is a mystic—and whatever Russia will do in the future will be permeated with mysticism and idealism. Knowing this, we can be assured that on whatever lines her advancement takes place in her free growth of individuality as a nation, it will not be on Western lines, which are neither mystical nor ideal. And the mysticism which floods the soul of the Russian—the consequence of living through countless generations in a great, sombre, lone land—has made him the most susceptible of men. I once heard an Englishman in a Moscow club, supercilious about business qualities, describe the Russians as "bearded babies." He spoke truer than he knew, for he was bearing testimony to the simplicity of their character. What the Russian is in business so he is in faith: he is simple-minded. The weird silence of his desolate steppes has impressed him till he is naturally religious. Strange religions have exercised their sway upon him. When he writes a novel he is mystical. When he paints a picture there is mysticism in it. And mysticism is own brother to pessimism in the Slav temperament.

Always under the frippery and the gaiety of merry evenings in Russia you know there is sadness. The poorest moudjik is constantly asking himself the eternal questions. You meet a lady in society, charming, evanescent, a fascinating butterfly conversationalist, and you know she has not a care in the world. But you call upon her the next afternoon to have tea and you find her in the depths of depression, also asking the eternal questions.

In no country in the world is suicide so common as in Russia. There is some truth in the assertion of superficial observers that the vagaries of the Russian, one day boisterous with enthusiasm, the next day moody and pessimistic, are due to the artificial life of society, the late hours, the excitement. The real cause is the temperament of the people. It is not the system of government which makes people sad —the vast majority of Russians never bother their heads about the system of government—but pessimism is the inheritance of the Slav race. If a lofty-souled poet devised an angelic rule the Russian would still be sad. Therefore we cannot talk about Russia emerging upon "a bright era of happiness." Russia will never be bright, and the people never will be happy. But Russia will emerge upon an era of Slav nationality—not because Russia is all Slav, but because Slavism is the yeast in nationality—and then she will be forceful and individual.

The politician with a propaganda and the man who has been seared by coming into unhappy contact with autocracy, will very likely have other pro-

grammes than I have ventured to sketch. Probably they will remind me that the Russian character is so complex that no foreigner, of quite different race and a Western way of thinking, can ever fathom and interpret it. That is absolutely true; but countless Russians have devoted their literary skill to interpreting the national character and he who reads can learn.

The problem of Russia is aggravated by the fact that within the border lines of the Empire are many other races which are Russian by law, but with no Slavic ambitions—a subject with which I will deal in a subsequent chapter. In the sixteenth century Russian territory was quadrupled. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Empire covered three million square miles; to-day it covers eight million square miles. And though Russia is the biggest nation in Europe, it is also the youngest. She has a population of about 120,000,000 white people, and yet it has been within little more than a century that she has taken her place as a great Power.

Her youth as a nation must always be borne in mind when considering her future. There are nations in Europe which have run their race and are old and feeble; there are others vibrant with the strength of lusty manhood; but Russia as a nation has been under the tutelage of foreign countries and only now is she really awakening—the nation as a whole and not the political section of it—to consider what her manhood shall be? Of only one thing can we be certain: in the majesty of her individuality she will pursue a line of her own.

CHAPTER X

ALIEN RUSSIANS

REFERENCE has already been made in these pages to the enormous influence foreign countries have had on the development of Russia. There is scarcely a phase of life which has not been copied from some other land. Of course, nations are interdependent; they give to and take from each other. Russia has taken enormously from other nations and given very little in return. Yet, alongside this, you have the fact that Russia has absorbed many races in widening the borders of her Empire. Russia comes second to Great Britain in the variety of races and confusion of tongues beneath her flag. But whilst the many races under the Union Jack are scattered throughout the world, the different alien races which live beneath the flag with the double eagle are all enclosed within one ring-fence of something like 25,000 miles in circumference. To trace Russia's line of territory would produce a measurement about the same as a stretch round the world.

Russia is buttressed with alien races. I mention the chief. There are the Finns in the north; then the Baltic province people of German origin; then the Poles; then the variety of races north of the Carpathians reaching to the Black Sea; and, as you journey south through the Caucasus in Georgia

and Armenia, or away east over the Ural Mountains into Siberia, you travel through a museum of Oriental or semi-Oriental races. Above all there are the Jews, and Russia has within her borders more than half the Jews in the world.

Now, whilst most of the alien races in the Empire count for little, there are others which count for a great deal, principally the Jews and those who are German in origin, though not in nationality. Russians have their own wonderful qualities, but in influence upon the great outer world they are practically dormant so far. If you are engaged in commerce, you usually deal with a Russian having a German name, and in the sciences, the learned professions and politics you generally find it is the Jewish brain which is to the front.

Take the case of the Jews. Heavy restrictions are placed upon them. Millions of them have been confined to particular areas. Unless they have special university attainments, they are not allowed to live in certain cities. Many Russians make a grimace of disgust when there is reference to the Jews. All of this the Western man does not understand, and he resents and criticises the action of Russia. I have made a study of the Jews, and I do not think I will be accused of being antagonistic to them.* But I do understand the Russian frame of mind toward the Jews, and that is the point to be considered in the present connection.

Were I a Russian and asked to explain my

* See the Author's book, "The Conquering Jew."

antipathy to the Jew, I would—if I answered honestly—reply somewhat like this: "The Jew is much more clever than I am. He may have a soul and an aspiration after ideals, but I am never conscious of them. Whenever I come in contact with him he is scheming to get advantage of me, and he generally succeeds if I give him the chance. In business I cannot live in competition with the Jew. Wherever the Jews are allowed to live they get all the trade, and the Russian is pushed on one side. After all, Russia belongs to the Russians, and why should these people be allowed to oust us? The Jew always squeezes the poor peasants who come within his grasp. He is quicker-witted than I am. So he is successful at the universities, and he rather monopolises the professions of the law and medicine. He cannot have such a love for Russia as I have, because he is not a Russian. He is a very shrewd politician, but I think that when he talks about political liberty he is chiefly thinking of means to give the Jews greater power in Russia. One of the reasons why political enfranchisement does not move faster in Russia than it does is because we know that, if there were full political liberty here as you have it in the West, the Jews, with their superior political instinct, would soon be our masters, and that is what we will not have."

Most of us know the answers to all this; but I am sure I am accurately representing the thoughts of the fair-spoken ordinary Russian on the Jewish question. The Jews, however, have played an

honourable part in the war. Thousands of them are serving in the Russian Army, and many of them have given their lives; but it always causes heart-burn amongst the Jews that not one of their number is allowed to be an officer in the Russian Army. Some of the restrictions against the Jews have recently been removed; there is now more freedom for them to settle in various parts of the country than was formerly the case. Whether Russia will ever give the Jews equal rights with Russians, I have no means of knowing. That it would be to the commercial advantage of Russia I am sure, but that it would aid in the development of Russia's peculiar idealistic characteristics I very much doubt.

Now take the German element. In trade, Russia has for a generation been a colony of Germany. And when you go into the big business houses in any of the great cities you may deal with a Russian, but the chances are he will have a German name and the head of the firm, or his father, has come from the Baltic provinces. There are great and striking exceptions, but in a general description—and in dealing with a huge subject generalities must be allowed—Russia has been mainly dependent in the near past on manufactured goods imported from Germany, and her principal businesses are run by Russians of German origin. I have made a calculation that 85 per cent. of the business of Russia, at one stage or another, passes through the hands of men of German origin. It is the knowledge of this, behind the fury of war, which is stirring the

Russian to a determination that when peaceful times come his country will gird herself to industrial action. I have stories yet to tell of what Russia has accomplished, so that she be no longer the vassal in commerce of any nation.

Now, no mind—unless it be the mind of the Jew—could differ more radically from the Russian than the German mind. Peter the Great invited the German to his Empire. The new capital of Petrograd was largely made in Germany. The German colonist lived isolated in the towns and preened himself in his superiority before the gaze of the mere moudjik. The Germanic race got its foot well into Russia. Nearly all business Russians speak German. Yaroslav, the city of millionaires, gave all its official posts to Germans. The Director of the Lyceum of Jurisprudence, the Government Architect, the Government Engineer, all were Germans. Petrograd had its German daily paper. In Government offices in Petrograd it was customary to hear German spoken. Though the tongue is now forbidden, I have been informed it can be sometimes heard even in these days of war.

But the mass of the people, because so many of the officials have German names, because the bulk of the best shops belong to folk with German names, have bitterly disliked the Germans. Long before the war a peasant was acquitted by the local court after being charged with doing someone a bodily hurt on it being represented that the injured man had called him a German.

The German Russian was inclined to sneer at the unpracticality of the pure Russians. When travelling in the south I have had pointed out to me the neat prosperity of the German colonists (quite true) and the untidy, lackadaisical, let-things-slide condition of Russian villages (quite true, also). Peter the Great was the first pro-German. The moudjik still uses "German" as an adjective meaning foreign and open to suspicion. German books written on Russia are full of sneers at the Russian's lack of culture; they tell you how her one salvation lies in adopting German methods. And German influence and German thought have been running like vari-coloured threads through Russia; are running at this moment through educated society in Russia; rather, I ought to have written society in Petrograd, for most of us make the error of drawing our conclusions about all Russia from the official capital, whereas Petrograd is the worst city in the whole of the Empire in which to study the true Russian character. I have found that character in Moscow, in Odessa, in Samara, away out in Irkutsk, but rarely in Petrograd.

For the time, Poland has been wrested from Russia. I was in Warsaw during its worst days, and although it would be folly to assert that the Poles were enthusiastically pro-Russians, they joyed in the belief that Poland was destined to regain its autonomous nationality. They will never get that from Germany. For the old rule of Russia and the new rule of Germany, the Pole has nothing to say;

but he takes it there is a promise by the Czar that once the iron rod of the Germans has been broken, Poland will not be a disrupted country under different masters, but will resume something like its old independence; the Russian, German, and Austrian Polands will be united, and governed after the style of a British dominion with the Czar as overlord. The Poles are the natural aristocrats of Central Europe; there is a native distinction about the nobility, a grace in carriage and a culture in manner which is not to be rivalled by any other aristocracy in the world. If you would know what pride of race means, you must wait till you can go to Warsaw and be the guest of a Polish family on a country estate. The Poles have their blemishes—I am not going to write about them here—but they also have generous ambitions. And if they "play the game" in these days of German occupation and temptation, they will be worthy of kingly consideration by the Emperor of All the Russias.

Finland has been described as Russia's Ireland—as Ireland was when she and Great Britain had divergent views in regard to administration. My personal knowledge of Finland is limited to a short visit of a fortnight; but it is a land of quiet fascination, studded with a thousand lakes, and ought to be better known to the British holiday-maker. I have heard people declare Finland is thirty years in advance of other parts of the Russian Empire. The Finns are sullen under Russian suzerainty—the Czar is their Grand Duke—for they lack independence and

have no national flag. The Finns are "advanced." New ideas are accepted because they are new. Women sit in the Finnish Parliament. In lieu of personal military service the Finns pay an annual contribution to the Russian Exchequer. The Finn has his own coinage. When his postage stamp was suppressed he issued a black one, and used it along with the Russian's "image and superscription."

The last half-century has seen the development of the Finn. Education is more advanced than in any other part of the Empire. There are over 2,500 students in the University at Helsingfors; about 500 of these are women. Helsingfors was burned down early in the last century. Its chief buildings were rebuilt by a German architect, who was a genius. It is clean and tidy, owning a school of art, and a zoological gardens containing no animals. The factories in Finland are the cleanest in the world. They are worked by water-power from the lake rapids.

The Finn does not consider that he was conquered by the Czar when he became Grand Duke of Finland. It was a federation. He kept his own army up till 1898. When threatened with the universal army rule, Finland went into mourning and tolled the church bells—and obtained a compromise. The language question is very acute. Swedish is largely spoken, and Russian is forced on the Finn as an official language. The street notices are written in three languages. The police wear a German uniform.

An atmosphere of superiority pervades Finland;

were it not for the survival of his wizards and nature-gods, the Finn might be in danger of becoming smug. As a matter of fact, the Finns are quite human. They can play as artlessly as any Little Russian. The women not only graduate at the University and sit in the Diet; they also follow the trades of artisans, plasterers and carpenters, paper-hangers, and what they will. There are about 40,000 more women than men in Finland. That is partly because so many of the men have gone to America.

The holiday visitor to Russia will probably find the hotel porter is a Lett, and it is more likely than not the interpreter he hires is a Lett. A curious folk are the Letts—two millions of them, inhabiting country to the south-west of Riga and nursing a national ideal in spite of German and Russian solicitude for their enlightenment. A decade and a half ago Riga had a predominantly German character. German was spoken more than any other language; but to-day Lettish has taken a new lease of life. A number of Germans found it advantageous to adopt Lettish names long before the war broke out. Like the Finns, and in contradiction of the Russian habit, the Letts live in isolated dwellings. They are more prosperous than the real Russians. The Letts are inclined to revolution. They are largely employed as clerks in Russia, and have their own clubs, which strictly exclude other nationalities. As domestic servants they are sought after on account of their honesty.

Then there are the Lithuanians. They have the country which has been devastated by much fighting and comprises the provinces of Vilna, Grodno, Vitebsk, Mohilev, and Minsk; it is a marshland with a good deal of forest. The peasant is fair, with blue eyes. He is famous neither for cleanliness nor honesty, and is much under the thumb of the Jew, who abounds in this district and monopolises the trade. The orthodox Lithuanian is devout. There is squalor and a general air of dejection.

Take a jump with me far south, and you will be delighted as I was with the Moldavians who live in Bessarabia, next door to Roumania. Indeed, if you talk higher politics in a Bucharest café you are sure to hear that Bessarabia is really Roumanian and not Russian. Anyway, the best dancers and singers and bright birds of life called Russian are usually Bessarabian. The women are attractive, with sparkling eyes and vivacious manners. Their houses, or cassas, are always kept clean, and are delightfully decorated with silk draperies, bright coloured cushions (stuffed with hay) and little rows of yellow gourds hung from the beams of the living-room. The altar is in a corner of the room facing east. It is decorated with hangings of silk or cotton, candles, and flowers: a blessed loaf is kept under the ikon, and sheaves of corn in the form of a cross. The Moldavian men are rather a clumsy race. They shave their beards like the Little Russians, and are much the same in their characteristics. The girls are allowed to choose their own husbands. The

Photograph by C. O. Bulla, Petrograd

REPAIRED WHILST YOU WAIT

village tavern is used as a local club, and here is held what is called the *sokōtellos* or friendly chat. The suppression of spirituous drink now deprives the *sokotellos* of its chief charm, if not of its essence.

Think of the innumerable races in the Caucasus and south of the range. I shall never forget a ride I had from Vladikavkas on the European side right over to Tiflis on the Asiatic side. The fascination I found was not in the terrible scenery, but in the innumerable races. It would seem that the races of the earth once went wandering and half of them bumped up against the Caucasus Mountains and have remained there ever since. When I was younger I used to be captivated by the exquisite eyes of the Georgian women, though the men folk were a pleasant, easygoing, not-much-good-for-anything lot. There were the Armenians at Erivan, alert-eyed and clever and with national aspirations like those of the Poles, for half their country was in Russian territory and the other half in Turkish. Right down to the Araxes river I found remnants of the old days of Persian sovereignty in the costumes and the language of the people—the women are veiled. Then the hillsmen, the people from whom I was to expect all kinds of ear-slitting troubles, but from whom I never got anything but genuine, though crude, courtesy. What a land! There is a hillside on whose slopes lie seven villages, and in each village a different language is spoken. In Tiflis town, fifty languages are spoken.

It has been my lot to have vagabonded all over

the earth, and although I have seen strange people in strange parts, there is no country which is such a museum of races as Russia. Idling along the shores of the Crimea, I have slept in the huts of Tartars, the descendants of the Mongolian horde that once threatened to overrun Europe. In the tea-houses of Astrakan I have found Tartars sitting rapt, listening to the screech of a gramophone. On the boats plying up the Volga the meek-faced Kalmucks have come and squatted on their haunches. Out on the steppes of Siberia I've met the Kirghis, and beyond Lake Baikal come across the Buriats, singularly like the Red Indians of the American plains.' The personal pronoun has been dropping from my pen rather frequently during the last ten minutes of writing; but I do not think any apology is necessary, because I am pleased to have had the opportunities to go wandering through the by-lanes of the Russian Empire.

It is impossible to write about the Russian without pointing to the Tartars. The Tartars gripped Russia for two hundred years, and their mark upon the land remains in many ways; but the modern Tartar has nothing heroic about him. He is quiet, unambitious, industrious, and sometimes efficient. I have been in Tartar villages in European Russia and it was hard to get rid of the illusion one was in the Orient. The narrow streets are lined with mud-walled houses. There is the mosque with its minarets and a coffee-shop where one can get real coffee in place of the inevitable samovar. From

outside a Tartar habitation looks unappetising. In reality the Tartars are a clean people. Be persuaded to enter, and the interior will be an agreeable surprise. Divans and bright coloured rugs replace the benches of the Great Russian peasant. The gaudy draperies that the Little Russian loves are here in even more profusion. One, however, misses the ikon, for the Tartar is a Mohammedan. The Tartar peasant is prosperous and very hospitable. The women are more emancipated than is generally imagined. I recall at Kazan finding a Tartar quarter of the town built in Eastern style. The Tartars here are wealthy merchants. They have their mosques, and full liberty as to the practices of their religion.

Tartars are well content with their lot. There is no political propaganda, and no national ideal. Yet they are a virile race. The men are broad-shouldered; they have dark narrow eyes, and wear a straggling beard. They are bad agriculturists. The Tartar, however, is comparatively well-educated. The Mullah teaches the boys in the village school. The children stay at school till they are twelve years of age. The Mohammedan College at Ufa educates the Mullahs, and also the ordinary Tartar who needs a higher education. Polygamy is infrequent. The family life doesn't differ greatly from that of other Russians except that the Tartar women are seldom allowed to work in the fields. They grow very stout and use a quantity of rouge to enhance their charms. They also blacken their teeth and the palms of their

hands. The superior degree of comfort enjoyed by a Tartar family to that of the Russian in a village is marked.

The Bashkir is another of the Czar's Mohammedan subjects. His name is said to mean "Dirty head." No wonder, since his head being shaved in childhood he dons a skull-cap which he never removes. This race is composite of the Finn and the Mongol. They are better-looking than the Tartars, especially the women. The men wear a long white shirt and a sleeveless coat—only those of high class may wear sleeves, and these increase in size with the wearer's dignity. The women wear harem skirts and a mass of filigree jewellery by way of ornament. They are allowed to labour in the fields, and are not veiled except on special occasions. They live a hand-to-mouth existence, partly nomadic, making rough shelter for themselves in the summer-time in the hill districts and wilder parts of the country. They use camels in place of horses, and yoke them to the plough; but as a rule they hire the Russian peasant to till their land for them.

The Russian race of which the Western world has heard most since the War began is that of the Cossacks. I must make it clear that I do not include them amongst the alien races in Russia. They are proud Russians, though with more of the Tartar than of the Slav in them. But I introduce them here because they are in many ways a people apart from the Russians as generally known. The Cossacks are the *Kazaki*, the free men, the descendants of the

band of men who refused to serve either the encroaching Tartar or Pole, or the tyrannical ruler of the land. In the days of the great invasions, this company of free men was formed. They were the knights errant of Russia, resisting the strong on behalf of the weak. Men of all tribes joined the original *Kazachestvo*—there were even Englishmen among them, it was said. They took possession of the steppe land in the south, which was well adapted to the purpose of harbouring a body of outlaws. There the grass grew to a height over which a rider's head and shoulders could barely be seen. There were also long fissures in the grounds, hundreds of feet in depth, and stretching many miles, which made ideal places of ambush. Furthermore, game abounded and could be easily caught. Established here, the company of free men acquired the military arts of their persecutors, and made successful raids on the Tartar or Polish caravans that ventured their way. The Cossack was a kind of Robin Hood. He was chivalrous to women and children. He developed an extraordinary skill in riding.

In time the *Kazaki* became a powerful bulwark against the invader. They protected the native villages and undertook a special crusade against the enslaving of Christian children by the Mussulman. The *Kazaki* were always highly religious. They were the champions of the orthodox faith. As the guardians of the country the *Kazaki* refused to pay land taxes. Exemption was wisely accorded to the "free men" and their services as unmatched

fighters were recognised. They fought for whatever they considered to be the right cause, and they were by disposition "agin the Government." Their organisation was wonderful, and a severe kind of discipline was maintained. In the first communities formed by the *Kazaki*, no women were admitted; a man who brought so much as his mother or sister was promptly hanged! These *Kazaki* had to be celibates, members of the orthodox religion, and patriotic Russians. Their communities were called the *Setch*. Members comprised adventurers and chivalrous spirits of all sorts. It was the very embodiment of romance. The village *Kazaki*, men who married and lived in the villages with their families, would send their sons to the *Setch*. It was a high calling to which a baby might be devoted from the cradle.

It was over the tax-paying that the *Kazaki* entered into a bond with the Government. The agreement was that the Cossack paid no taxes, but gave military service for life. The Cossack's privileged position has made his village a model of prosperity and contentment. The district is exempt from general administration. The heir-apparent is chief Hetman or captain, and a vice-Hetman represents him.

The Cossack is democratic, with a free system of self-government. Class distinctions are not allowed to exist. Officers are chosen like civil officials by the Government, and every male Cossack is a soldier technically for life. He serves twenty years—three in training, twelve in the Army, and five in the

reserve. The exceptions that exist apply to a breadwinner, a priest or teacher, or one out of four brothers. A paid substitute may be sent. The Cossack in his military capacity finds his way all over the Empire. He has become the object of dislike owing to the unpleasant weapon which he uses when he is keeping order—a whip formed of leather thongs in which are enclosed pieces of lead. It is with this knout that he disperses a crowd.

The Don Cossacks are the most enterprising agriculturists in Russia. They invest in up-to-date machinery and take advantage of the State Loan Banks to procure more land. If the Cossacks have sold their birthright, they have at least managed to acquire a bountiful mess of pottage.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CHAPTER XI

MOSCOW IN DIFFERENT MOODS

It so happened that I was in Moscow when it went mad with anti-Germanism. All the Germans and Austrians, naturalised or unnaturalised, were cleared out. There was wreckage of whole streets of shops. As an upshot the chiefs of police were dismissed, because this rioting was not checked. Meanwhile, martial law was proclaimed. To be found in the streets after ten o'clock at night was to be instantly arrested.

Moscow had bitterness in its heart against the German invasion. When the war broke out all German and Austrian residents were interned. But this was not enough for the populace. There were too many naturalised Germans in Moscow, who were suspected of also retaining their Teutonic nationality. Some of the greatest stores had names over their portals that were certainly not Russian. Rising public feeling compelled the authorities to apply advice which amounted to compulsion, that the Germans had better put a long distance between themselves and the Kremlin. They went, but before going most of them, if not all, transferred their businesses to Russians. This was not enough. The Moscow idea was that the Government should have

MOSCOW

Photograph by Daziaro, Moscow

closed and sealed all establishments which had been in the possession of the enemy.

There was one of those swift uprisings, the origin of which it is difficult to locate. The students of Moscow University have the credit of beginning the rioting. I was told that a committee of them carefully drew up a list of German and Austrian shops. Anyway, when the window-smashing began, leading to raiding, the firing of premises and the wholesale destruction of property, parties of young fellows simultaneously turned up at the forsaken suburban residences of the alien rich men and demolished them. At the same time about 20,000 working men went on strike, including those engaged at the largest calico factory in Moscow. There were crowds in the streets, probably a hundred thousand persons, and there were fiery and patriotic orations, much waving of the Russian flag, constant singing of the National Anthem, and immense cheering.

Then "the fun commenced." For nearly two days it lasted. The windows were smashed, the places were gutted, millions of roubles' worth of valuable goods were thrown into the streets. Everybody was free to help himself or herself. Furniture was burnt, and there were many attempts to give the shops themselves to the flames. One German was caught on his premises; he was chased to the river, where he was chivvied as boys chivvy a rat, until someone hit him over the head—and that was the end of him. One of the first places attacked was a German wine and spirit store, where, under the pro-

hibition law, everything was under lock and key. But lock and key did not count for much before the mob; they were soon at the bottles, and a drunken and wild orgy followed in the consumption of £15,000 worth of liquor. The casks in the cellar were broken, and at least twelve of the invaders were drowned in the liquor, for it was four feet deep in one place. Many men went raving mad with drunkenness, and bottles of champagne could be bought at sixpence (25 kopecks) a bottle.

All the big piano and music warehouses had belonged to Germans. Crash they went, and the crowd surged in. From the first storey they pitched out grand pianos. From one place alone eighteen grand pianos were tossed into the streets, some of them worth several hundreds of pounds. These were broken up as though hurriedly wanted for firewood; their legs were chopped off and the wires ripped out. Violins, mandolins, wind instruments were seized, and there were farmyard concerts. Even wounded soldiers hobbled along, scraping energetically and most unmusically at fiddles. The shop of the principal dealer in billiard tables was pounded to pieces, the cloth ripped, the slates cracked, the ivory balls broken. The firm of Mendl had five stores destroyed by the mob. All the goods, the miscellaneous wares of a Moscow Whiteley, were thrown by the armful out of the smashed windows. A held-up tramcar had the roof piled with garments. Every little German shop, tobacconist, or barber, or baker, hundreds of them, suffered from the fury of the people.

Hooligans, as usual, were responsible for most of the damage. But the street crowds were to a large extent composed of well-dressed citizens, including ladies, and there were no qualms about taking sable cloaks, boots and shoes, garments of every description. In most places not an article, not a whole piece of furniture, was allowed to remain. Every German name was obliterated. In the excitement the shops of some Russians with Germanic names went down before the mob, though here and there, on the discovery of the mistake, hostilities ceased. The shop of an Austrian with the most valuable collection of furs was stripped, and the ermine coats, muffs, boas were all appropriated by the crowd. A shop where there had been for sale a great collection of gold decorated salon furniture went the usual way. The biggest book store in Moscow was torn to pieces. A shop with the most expensive crystal, cut-glass, and high-class crockery—the firm has a factory outside Moscow employing about three thousand hands—was reduced to atoms. A big photographic place was wiped out. Even an old-established firm settled in Moscow for a hundred years did not escape. The worst mistake was the smashing of the premises of a firm which had been engaged in supplying the Russian army with surgical appliances, field glasses, and all sorts of delicate instruments, and which was swiftly put out of business.

For nearly two days did the mêlée continue. Unofficially, it is computed that over a hundred

and twenty shops were set on fire, but the official number was thirty-two. When night came it looked as though Moscow were going to be razed to the ground. Fortunately there was no wind.

Probably imagining they were doing the right thing under the circumstances, the Moscow police did not interfere. But the Governor-General took quite a different view. Instantly he grasped the seriousness of the situation; he put Moscow under martial law. When the soldiers with loaded rifles appeared on the scene, the streets promptly cleared, but not before the soldiers had fired into the swaying, raging mass. The official number of those killed was nine, though everybody believes there were many more.

Within a few hours Moscow was normal, except for the gashed frontages of dozens of shops. So effective was the Governor-General's action that the prohibition against being in the streets after ten o'clock was withdrawn after a couple of nights. But this was not the end of affairs. To mark displeasure the heads of the police departments were compelled to leave Moscow. To prevent attacks on aliens the authorities made a thorough search, so they could be removed. My own hotel was completely searched, and at two o'clock in the morning eight blear-eyed naturalised Germans and Austrians were "removed."

Except for this tornado outburst, it cannot be said there was much on the surface of things to tell there was a great war. But just as we know that the temperament of London is very different from

MOSCOW IN WINTER

what it was in peace times, so I found a great undercurrent of feeling in Moscow. Life proceeds as usual. Business is brisk—except in the German shops, which have been smashed, and in the drink shops which have been closed—the streets are full of people on fine afternoons, the tramcars are crowded, the open-air concerts are well patronised, and the well-to-do hasten to their country houses in the evening.

Yet the Russians are affected by the war. They are depressed when things go wrong. They blame themselves; they criticise Ministers; they cannot understand why England does not supply Russia with more ammunition. One morning I saw three ordinary Russian criminals being marched through the streets; terrible ruffians they looked, and they were guarded by eight soldiers, who kept close to them with drawn swords. The same afternoon I saw fifteen Austrian prisoners being escorted by a single Russian soldier through one of the main streets. He marched ahead, and they followed in a bunch, a little travel-stained, certainly not unhappy, and smiling upon the folks who looked at them. There was no animus against the Austrians.

Prisoners of war are constantly being marched through Moscow. Most of them are on their way to Siberia, but many are drafted into agricultural districts, where there is a shortage of men. Gangs of prisoners are to be seen mending roads in the suburbs. A train of wounded came into one of the stations from the Polish front. I never saw such a train in length, and I am told such ambulance trains are

usual; there were sixty wagons. As the ordinary passenger trains in Russia are so arranged that third and fourth class travellers have "sleepers" as well as those who can afford to travel first and second class, it is not difficult to provide lying-down places for the injured. But hundreds of ordinary goods wagons are requisitioned for ambulance work; mattresses are put in, and on the huge sliding doors a red cross is painted. No doubt Russia has splendidly equipped ambulance trains, and though I saw lots of trains filled with wounded—what a tale the long procession told—I saw none except those made up with ordinary carriages.

The Russian Ivan has not the grim humour of the English Tommy under tragic conditions. He is a big-hearted and rather soft-hearted boy. I was most interested in watching the Russian soldiers helping the wounded Austrians. One prisoner was limping and looked mournful. A Russian was giving him a helping arm, and saying, "Cheer up; you'll soon be in love with a pretty Russian girl." The sentiment toward the Germans was not friendly. And the demeanour of the German prisoners was not of a kind to invite courtesy. Whilst the Austrians were good-natured and rather gave one the idea they regarded the business as something of a joke, the Germans were sulky and scornful. They refused to accept their fate, and with black hate on their ugly faces piled insult on their captors. I have heard of officers spitting in the faces of Russian doctors who desired to dress their wounds, and throw-

ing soup at the nurses who had no other mission than to help them.

There is something that is very lovable about the common Russian soldier. He is just as close to the heart of the people as are our Tommies in France. He is so big and simple-souled and patient, and he never "grouses."

You know what is being done in kindliness in England for the lads at the front, and what thought there is for the maimed when they return. But Russia has nothing to learn in tender-heartedness from any country. It is anything but perfect in organisation, but in spontaneity of generousness it is supreme. Everybody who can do anything is doing something. The people are doing far more for the soldiers than is the Government, and certainly many things which are left to the Government in England are left to associations in Russia. I know a Russian who had fifteen wounded in his house. They were rough fellows from the steppes and from Siberia, and had never been to Moscow till they were brought in an ambulance train.

We have no town in the British Empire which appeals to us in the same way that Moscow appeals to the peasant. It is not only the heart of Russia, but it is almost the soul of Russia. It is the city of the Kremlin, the holy of holies, where the Czars are baptised and married and crowned, and where there are fifteen hundred churches with golden and bright blue and multi-coloured domes.

It tells of the character of the race that the first

thought of the fifteen men brought into Moscow was that they should see the Kremlin and pray in the churches. It was almost worth while being wounded if that brought them to Moscow. Everything else counted for nothing; when could they be taken to the churches? And of the fifteen men, only one was capable of walking slowly. But when they were sufficiently convalescent my friend got motor cars, and had them taken through the holy gate—where everybody, even the Czar, uncovers—and these bronzed and shaggy-bearded men, all crippled for life, had the tears in their eyes as they looked on the glittering cupolas within the Kremlin walls. They had no words to tell their thoughts; they only felt.

On crutches and with sticks they hobbled from church to church, into the incensed gloom, and sought the ikons and put little candles before the saints and stooped and kissed the pictures. There was nothing incongruous in these stump-fisted, tousle-headed, unkempt moudjiks, wearing the grey coat of the Czar, prostrating themselves in humbleness in the gorgeous Uspensky Sobor, where the ikons are decorated with jewels which would purchase a province.

Folk of other faiths may point to the superstitions of the Russian Orthodox Church. But you do not think of these things when you witness the fervour and the devotion of these men who have travelled from the steppes to Moscow by way of the battlefields over a grievous road.

ENTRANCE TO THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW

Back in the private hospital their eyes glowed with joy that they had been to the Kremlin. They could not write, for education had not been for them; but they pleaded for letters to be written. The family of my Russian friend got ink and paper and sat by the chairs of the soldiers, and from dictation wrote to fathers and mothers and wives, not that they were well, or that they had been through stirring times in battle, but that they were in Moscow and had prayed in the churches of the Kremlin. And they knew their relatives far beyond the Volga and down by the Don side and over the Ural hills would think they had a noble reward.

Moscow opinion is Russian opinion, which is not the case in regard to Petrograd opinion. Many of the most imposing shops in Moscow were German, before the mob demolished them, and most of the goods on sale to-day are German. To crystallise Moscow opinion it is this: "We must never let the Germans live in such numbers in our midst. We must never let them get hold of so much of our trade again. We must find the means to do more for ourselves. We have got to wake up. Oh! that we had some leaders in whom we could have confidence, and who would show us the way to regenerate Russia!" When I got amongst two or three Russians they invariably wanted me to tell them what kind of man Lloyd George is. With a little smile upon the past I was astonished at myself telling Russians what a hustling fellow Mr. Lloyd George has proved himself to be.

Undoubtedly the war has led to a shortage in a good many things for which Russia was formerly dependent on Germany. As we are all on the look-out for blessings in disguise, it is a fact that easy-going Russia has been compelled to set to and make things for itself. Necessity is a useful spur to Russian industry. In some lines, the cotton and woollen industries, Russia, in turning out ordinary medium wares, has little to learn from England or Germany —and I bear personal testimony that the Russian army is well clad, as well as being excellently fed. Some other things Russia is starting upon are not so good as were formerly imported; but Russia is developing new industries. In the mind of the Moscow business man that should proceed; the weight of talk amongst all classes is, that it should proceed if only as a check upon German trading domination.

There is about a million and a half of persons in the city. Indeed there are more people than in normal times. A great many families from South-West Russia and from Poland escaped from the war danger and went to Moscow. This, with the extra spending abilities of the ordinary people, owing to saving on the alcohol bill, made Moscow shop business better than in peace times.

The manager of the biggest store in Moscow told me that his firm never did so well. Knowing the supply from Germany and Austria was cut off I asked from where he was getting material. He told me that some was being got from England,

through the agency of the parcel post—literally, millions of packages, reduced to the size and weight of the Post Office regulations, have come from England, which, if sent by the old method, would have little chance of arriving at all. Further, he admitted, when the war broke out and the trading community was nervous, he sent representatives into the provincial towns to buy from shop-keepers there. They were pleased to get rid of their stuff at fair prices, and the public in Moscow are glad to buy the goods at raised prices from this firm. Some things have doubled in price, especially on the luxurious side of life, but, if averages be struck, the cost of living in Moscow has not increased more than 15 per cent. over peace times. On all railway journeys the fare is increased by 25 per cent. as a special war tax.

Anyone having a German name—and there are thousands—has a millstone about his neck. The Hotel Berlin changed into the Hotel d'Angleterre in a night. The Hotel Dresden ceased to be the Hotel Dresden by the simple expediency of censoring the name of the German town, but no substitute has been provided. It is the Hotel ——— which is an awkward direction to the droshky driver. The *tchworshiks* want to charge more than ever for a ride in their awkward vehicles and behind their malodorous persons. The price of oats has gone up. "I cannot pay you so much!" exclaimed a lady I know to an intending extortioner, "for I've lost my home owing to the War." "And they've taken a horse of mine,"

said the driver, "so I must have more money." A funeral passed—a white funeral, therefore an expensive one, for all the trappings of woe were in white; the horses were like equine invalids so swathed were they in white sheets, and the hired men walking by the heads of the horses were in long white coats and white—white, not grey—top hats. In front of the procession men were scattering juniper, the sign of public sorrow. "How would you like to be rich?" asked the lady. "Barina," said the *ichvorshik* crossing himself, "I've got something to eat and a place to sleep, and it would mean more work to look after more money; but even for such as I they might spread some juniper. I'll take you for fifty kopecks"—which was a third of the price he had just asked.

On the open spaces within the Kremlin walls, recruits were daily drilling. Conscription draws from all classes, and the fresh drafts come in bunches through the streets, but without the sprightly step of the lads in England. They were marched and wheeled and taught how to handle a musket, and they disappeared singing hymns whilst other Johnny Raws took their places.

The police were constantly on the watch for spies. To speak German is to be arrested. Sometimes English is mistaken for German and there is trouble. I was conversing with an acquaintance in a tramcar, when a passenger jumped up and denounced us as Germans. My acquaintance has a close acquaintance with the Russian vernacular, which

SOLDIERS DRILLING IN THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW

is expressive, and he made the accuser look foolish whilst providing entertainment for our other fellow passengers.

If you drew a circle fifty miles round Moscow you would enclose the chief manufacturing area of Russia. Russians are proud of historical Moscow, with its Kremlin and its traditions, but they are just as proud of the part the old capital is playing as a modern up-to-date European commercial centre. The wealth of Moscow merchants is notorious, and some American millionaires would be chagrined at the manner they are outdone in ostentation by their Russian brethren. Also, some of the finest hospitals, art galleries, and works intended for the improvement of the people owe their origin to the generosity of rich men. But through and around this is a real civic spirit, a municipal pride, a belief that whatever Russia intends to do it is for Moscow to lead the way.

Russians are perfectly aware that folk of other countries regard them as semi-barbarians. With a cruel smile they will sometimes allude to this in the presence of the foreigner. They know that in national advancement they lag behind other nations, and in Moscow, which is the intellectual home of Russia as well as its chief trading mart—see its University, magnificent opera house, its "Artistic Theatre," built on a special style and devoted to realism, its picture galleries, its conservatoire of music, its museums—there has been a genuine and successful desire to remove the causes for pointing the finger.

Gradually the awful cobbled streets, which shook one to pieces when driving in the particularly small droshkies peculiar to Moscow, are giving place to level asphalted thoroughfares. There are many fine motor cars, but though there are taxi-cabs, the number is small. There is a first-rate municipal electric tramway service, which provides cheap fares, and at the same time earns considerable money for the town. There are, however, no motor omnibuses. The telephone service is efficient; no middle-class house is without it. The same can be said in regard to electric light. During the last few years all electric and telephone wires have been put underground; thus Moscow is relieved from the overhead disfigurements which are such eyesores in all American and many European cities. The city has a new water supply, and there is steady progress in equipping it with modern drainage. For quite ten years the erection of wooden houses, which used to be the custom, has been prohibited. Most of the wooden buildings have disappeared, and there has arisen a crop of high-storeyed structures, steel-framed, big-windowed, stacks of offices, and enormous piles of flats.

When I was last in Moscow, eight or nine years before, the city was wallowing in what was then called the "New Art," and business premises, as well as residential "palaces," presented weird façades, with fantastic architecture and bulging or miniature windows, and decorations which were quaint without being beautiful. Moscow, however, has grown out

of that phase of culture. When I inquired for some of the amusing horrors which attracted me on my former visit, I learned that most of them had been obliterated and less ornate fronts substituted. Many of the big shops in the principal streets of Moscow are as imposing as the new buildings to be seen in Regent Street.

You can, therefore, understand how Moscow prides itself on being go-ahead. It has an enlightened city council. For two and a half years Moscow was without a mayor because the gentleman the citizens selected did not receive the approval of the Government; but the approval was soon forthcoming when the war broke out, and Moscow was expected to captain Russia in patriotic response. All public works are under the control of the municipality, but the chairmen of the various departments—lighting, roads, tramways, drainage, buildings—give up their ordinary work and devote themselves to the service of the town. Moscow has to contribute to the upkeep of the police, but the control is solely in the hands of Government nominees.

There are branches of Russian foreign chambers of commerce, but Moscow has no chamber of commerce of its own. The things that are done by a British chamber of commerce are looked after by a committee of the bourse, or stock exchange. But there is a powerful association of millowners which keeps its members notified about movements in the world's trade, particularly in regard to cotton. In the matter of labour disputes the employers meet

and act in concert. There is a bureau of information where a manufacturer may learn about prospective customers and be forewarned about those from whom payment is found difficult. Since the war has been on, the association has been useful in providing information about routes of commerce, and one of the latest circulars issued was one of advice against attempts being made to get raw material into Russia through Archangel, for the railway is monopolised by the Government for the carriage of war stores.

No trade unions are allowed in Russia; but this is no bar to general action on the part of the workmen when they believe they have a grievance. A good deal goes on under the surface in Russia, and when there is discontent about wages in one mill, although no meetings are held, propaganda proceeds, and suddenly the whole mass of workpeople come out on strike, not only in the mill affected, but the men in all similar mills come out. Then it is a case of pull-devil pull-baker between the employers and the men, or there is a conference between representatives to seek a basis of settlement.

By English standards Russian workmen are not well paid. But that does not mean that labour is cheap in Russia. I have gone somewhat closely into this question, and have arrived at the conclusion that for the same article it costs more to have it made in Russia than in England. The Russian workman does his work well under supervision, but he lacks personal ingenuity, and he is slow. On an average it takes ten Russian workmen to do in the

same time and equally well what six English workmen will do. Thus, though the English workman may receive thirty shillings a week to the Russian's twenty shillings, the cost of Russian labour is dearer than English.

There is a Workmen's Compensation Act in operation. All the big works have to provide hospitals for their employees, and in the case of small works a proportionate contribution must be made to a hospital. I doubt if there is any country in the world better provided with hospitals than Russia. All the big hospitals are free for the working classes, except that there is a town tax on everyone engaged in manual labour. This is equivalent to 2s. 6d. a year, and for this a workman and his family are entitled to hospital treatment. The Russian doctors are good—there are a great many women doctors in Moscow, and in dental work the ladies have most of the field to themselves—but I was sorry to hear anything but kindly remarks about the nurses. The allegation was that the patients, or their friends, had to bribe in order to secure proper attention. The cause of this is that the girls are very badly paid.

This pernicious system in vogue in Russia of paying public officials badly is one of the things which reduces the best friends of Russia almost to tears. There is scarcely an office that is not wretchedly paid. It is almost an impossibility for a policeman to live on his wages. To the honest official—and he is to be found—the path is hard and mean.

But the man without scruple—and he also can be found—blackmails and is bribed, and grows prosperous. You are told that every official has his price; that you can get nothing done without a bribe. So the first move, if you want anything done, is to find out whom you must oil. The whole thing is so customary that the Russians have got used to it. At the same time, they have contempt for the official classes, who are supposed to batten on the ill-gotten gains. The blame does not so much lie with the officials as with the wretched plan of paying bad salaries. With a wink over the shoulder you are informed they will find means to improve their income. Russia is going to do many amazing things towards her own regeneration after the war. One of the first improvements should be to pay all official classes better, and remove the temptation to accept bribery or levy blackmail.

The co-operative movement amongst small farmers and shops for the advantage of the working classes is growing considerably in Russia. The headquarters of the Union of Co-operative Stores is in Moscow, where purchases are made and distributed throughout the country to innumerable branches. The Officers' Stores is a good imitation of the Army and Navy Stores in London. The firm of Muir and Mirrielees, completely British, is the finest department store in Russia, and all Russians go there, as all visitors go to the Kremlin. English afternoon tea in the restaurant upstairs is very much the correct thing, where you are waited upon by the

A CHAPEL FOR PRAYER IN A MOSCOW STREET

most correct young ladies, with neat dresses and soft hands—so correct, indeed, that they are insulted if offered a tip for their courtesy, and so refined that maids lower in the social scale remove the dishes after they have been used. The refined damsels in biscuit-and-black-coloured frocks receive and fulfil your order; those in pink will "clear away and receive payment."

Quite a number of firms, foreign in their origin, are established in Moscow. There is Wogal and Co., who are bankers and sugar refiners, and the biggest tea importers and cement makers, and many other things. There is the firm of Knoop, the biggest importer of cotton in Russia, and under its wing is the firm of Messrs. Mather and Platt, supplying many of the cotton mills with machinery. The firm of William Miller has the biggest brewery in Russia, though in these teetotal days non-alcoholic beverages is its main concern. Many of the most prosperous concerns have German names, though Russian, and in these rough days suffer badly. The most important middlemen are Jews. There are restrictions upon Jews living in Moscow, but a young Jew who wants to follow a career in Moscow attends one of the Russian universities, gets his degree, enters the ranks of professional men, and thus gains the privilege of residence in Moscow.

Many technical schools exist in Moscow, and the young men are eager for instruction, though they think theoretical knowledge is superior to practical mechanics. That explains how they get knocked

over by the young English artisan who knows how to do things better than being able to describe how they ought to be done, in which the clever young Russian is superb.

Moscow merchants are open-minded about all new ideas concerning business management; they are willing to learn. American typewriters are in general use. Now and then there is a tendency to slackness—it is one of the Slav failings; to just not do a thing to completeness, and for the mind to be distracted toward a newer novelty. No people are more free from national conceit than the Russians. They are willing to be taught and would learn more if they would theorise less.

Ten railway lines have their termini in Moscow, and there is a loop line far beyond the city, so that goods can be switched round to the big trunk lines without coming into Moscow—but commercial men complained to me that instead of saving time it caused delay, was expensive, and altogether the management needed overhauling by a practical Englishman or American.

But though it is easy enough to point to the defects, the main thing is to recognise the enormous jump Moscow has made in commercial and industrial development in putting itself into line with the other great European cities. Those of us who knew Moscow ten and fifteen years ago can honestly admit astonishment at the transformation which has been made.

CHAPTER XII

THE ENGLISH IN MOSCOW AND SOME OTHERS

THERE is a happy British Colony in Moscow. Wherever in Russia there is a manufacturing concern, turning out engineering, cotton, woollen, or other goods requiring the use of modern machinery, there you are more likely than not to find some man from England or Scotland in charge.

There are Russian managers and some of them are good. But in practical knowledge the Russian is "not in the same street" with the Briton, and as conceit is not one of the Muscovite failings, the fact is admitted. Big Russian works, running well and prosperously, have sometimes dropped English managers and selected men of the country. Within a couple of years they have been obliged to re-engage Englishmen.

This is not due to accident; it is the result of a national trait. At home we British are in the habit of constantly looking at our industrial tongue and declaring things are not well with us internally. In the old days, Germany sneered at us, the United States was pleased to consider us amongst the back numbers, even the buoyant Dominions thought they could teach the "old man" how to do things. Yet when you find distant countries, from Brazil

to Siberia, wanting men to bring good brains to assist in the development of new lands, it generally means making a contract with a Briton.

As a people, we have a bushel of faults; but we have qualities which other races admire. The Russian business man will complain of the inadaptability of the English, will talk of the organising skill of the German and the energy of the American, but when he wants someone to run great works he finds the American ability is half-smothered beneath self-advertising talk and the German is arrogant or contemptuous. The Russian finds it best to employ the slow-moving, stubborn Englishman, who has no enthusiasm, who probably does not speak a word of Russian, but who does know his job.

The secret of British dominance in Russia is, first, the supreme excellence of English machinery; second, the capacity when there is a breakdown for the Englishman not only to know what should be done, but the willingness to take off his coat and amid muck and sweat do the repairs himself—a proceeding the theoretical Russian engineer cannot do—and, third, because the Englishman does not bully, is just, and has the ability to manage men.

You can go into the engineering shops and woollen mills in the neighbourhood of Petrograd and find Englishmen. It is the same in the cotton mills round Moscow. You will find Englishmen in the great iron works at Rostoff-on-the-Don, running the oil wells at Baku, or administering mines in far Siberia. Other countries have a share, but the

English come first. When I was going to Russia I ran into a bunch of Lancashire women proceeding to join their husbands who had foremen's jobs in Russia. It was on the frontier that some growling in the West Riding tongue attracted me to a man who knew not a word of Russian, and was in a tangle of a mess about his tickets, but otherwise placid, on his way to distant Tashkent for the better part of a year to put down coal-brick machinery for a Russian firm. He was a sample of the heavy but competent English artisan, in whom the Russians have confidence. It is computed that in the Russian Empire there are about 9,000 British subjects.

Archangel is in the public eye. It was an English sailor, Sir Hugh Willoughby, who discovered it in the sixteenth century. An "English Factory" was established; it was commercially prosperous. The relic of the days when the English occupied Archangel is the English church which still stands. When Peter the Great set up his capital on the swamps adjoining the Neva, the "English Factory" gradually migrated to Petrograd, and to-day there is a stretch of the river front which is known as the English Quay. The "English Factory" had considerable commercial advantages, even to the levying of tolls on merchant ships.

All these things have been swept away, but the Englishmen at Petrograd were the people who taught Russians the art of modern commerce. That was the beginning of British influence in Russia. But Russians were not blind to the shortcomings of the

colony. One day I came across a book written in 1842, in which there was complaint of the English, who shared the privileges of the natives without partaking of their burdens. They lived secluded amongst themselves, "despising all other nations, and more particularly their hosts, the Russians," and they "look down on all men, boast of their own indispensableness and their own invincible fleets."

When there were the great engineering developments in the middle of the nineteenth century Russia was slow to join in the advantages. But as she did, it was generally Englishmen who were employed. The manufacturing centre was Moscow, and here there grew up a colony numbering now about 800, but if the manufacturing places for fifty miles around are included, not far behind 1,500. There is a constant importation of managers and skilled artisans from England. Some return home on completing their contract; others settle and marry and raise families. Also there are a great number of English governesses; there must be several thousands of them in Russia. But though in cities like Petrograd and Moscow they have their residential clubs, most of them are hidden in the homes of well-to-do Russian families.

In the total of British subjects in Russia I am allowing a good margin in saying that not more than a third of them speak English. It is rare for an English woman to marry a Russian. It is a matter of common occurrence for an Englishman to marry a Russian woman. This is quite natural. He is removed from his countrymen; he learns Russian

CHURCH OF ST. BASIL, MOSCOW

Photograph by Daziaro, Moscow

and Russians are his friends, and the ladies he meets are Russian. So he marries, with possibly his wife speaking no English. The children learn Russian as their mother tongue, and it is a chance whether they learn English. Anyway, it is fairly certain that when the son of that marriage marries a Russian wife the children of the alliance will know no English unless they learn it as a foreign tongue. There are a number of prominent Russian subjects descendants of British settlers, such as General Creighton, the Governor of Vladimir province, who is a member of the English Church.

It is understandable, when a family is long settled in Russia and all ties are broken with England and intermarriage with Russians is usual, for the British nationality to be dropped. It is a very different matter when there are thousands of people three-parts Russian, only speaking Russian, who know of no British relatives, who belong to the Russian-Greek Church, who cannot be distinguished from Russians except by their names, yet who have British passports and claim all the rights of British citizenship. I know the British authorities had some hesitation when Mr. Smith, who is a Russian in everything but name, wanted a British passport. The British Parliament settled the difficulty for the future by enacting that from January 1st, 1915, all children of the second generation born in Russia shall not have British nationality. This has caused much heart-burning amongst the British colonists. A man born in Russia, whose father and mother

were British, is very proud of his British nationality. He himself marries an English girl, but the children are not recognised by England as British, and Russia refuses to accept them as Russian. A child born under these conditions has no status whatever until manhood is reached, and then he can comply with the ordinary requirements of an alien seeking naturalisation.

In Petrograd and Moscow are pleasant English clubs. Also there are sports clubs, and a start has even been made with a golf club in the neighbourhood of the capital. There are English churches and endowed beds in hospitals, well supported. St. Andrew's Church at Moscow is like a piece of transplanted England. Also there are excellent residential clubs for governesses, and that at Moscow, St. Andrew's House, is always full, providing brightness for women into whose lives an excess of sunshine does not often come.

All sorts go to the making of an English colony, from the ambassador to the freshly arrived clerk, and a spirit of comradeship prevails, especially evident when an unfortunate fellow-countryman needs a helping hand. Of course, there is always the transplanted lady—nobody in particular at home—who never forgets who she is, and the respect due to her as the wife of her husband, and who does not see why she should be called upon to be polite to little Mrs. So-and-so—but, dear me, where is the place in this wide world where there is a British colony that the same little comedy is not enacted?

With the customary exceptions, the Britons and

their families resident in Russia have justified their nationality. The Russians look up to the English, and, whilst by no means understanding them, accept them as the best that can be produced. And it is not only the Englishmen and their wives in the big towns who have maintained the national reputation. It is the individual Englishman and his wife living rather solitary lives in busy manufacturing towns, distant from the track of the tourist, and to whom large workshops look for guidance. Parts of Russia are very far away from the Old Country, places with unpronounceable names, and when the stray Englishman turns up—I am writing from personal experience—the joyous hospitality of the exile is unbounded. In a land of strange customs the British do their utmost to surround themselves with mementoes of home.

Commercially, Moscow is the Manchester of Russia. Indeed, it is much more, for there are few things it does not make. It is the wealthiest town in the Czar's dominions; three times as well off as the upstart capital of Petrograd, and doesn't it take care to say so! Every time there is a collection for a charitable purpose connected with the war, Petrograd leads the way, and then it is a point of honour for Moscow to do three times better. Flower days and flag days originated in Moscow, and the English Rose Day, I was assured, is but a copy.

The city has a population of one and a half million, and the big factories are busy making

munitions, but not enough. The suburbs are a labyrinth of cotton, wool, silk, and iron works.

Occasionally one meets the hirsute moudjik from the country, whiskered and ungainly, and with something of the uncouth fourteenth century about his appearance; but the town artisan is quite as smart as his English brother in appearance, though a slow worker. The Moscow working man lives well, and his "missus" does not dress badly, and I did not see any of the dirty poverty which one occasionally encounters at home.

Russia, as I have mentioned several times, gets a good deal of its manufactured articles from abroad. But if all the places had the spirit of Moscow it would be a bad look-out for the foreign importer. I bumped into a society called "For Russia," which seems to be a sort of Muscovite Tariff Reform League. "Why should we buy from the foreigner what we ought to make for ourselves?" The association has that question for its foundation. With German goods barred—they are still arriving, but they are always called Swedish—"For Russia" wants such a jump ahead that when peace time comes the occupation of the German "commercial," so far as Russia is concerned, will be gone. Russia, however, unable to satisfy its own requirements, will still want goods from abroad, and where better could they be obtained than from Russia's gallant ally, England? But when the ambitious programme of the "For Russia" society blossoms into maturity, where will the goods of brave England be then?

The Russian smiles, and as he lights another cigarette he says, "Ah, sir, why look so far ahead?"

Moscow, however, is asking that more skilled mechanics should come from Britain to teach their own folk how to do things. It is certain that the demand for Moscow goods—the cottons and the woollens are sometimes of a print and a design that would make a Lancastrian or a Yorkshireman have the hiccough, though they are what the peasants love—is more than Moscow can supply. As things are, it can turn out goods of the value of £20,000,000 a year; not the province, but the city alone. Another check is the shortage of fuel. Russia is badly off for coalfields, and it is interesting to know that the output of Moscow's mills is largely dependent on the output of coal in Old England. Let there be a coal strike in South Wales, and the Kirghis tribe on the steppes of Siberia has to pay more for its flame-coloured shawls.

Moscow's textile mills do a great trade in supplying cotton goods to the Czar's dominions east of the Volga river; the western parts of Russia favour the products of Germany (or did) and, to a lesser degree, those of England. The boot industry has long been on the boom, and with nearly two hundred million people to be shod the works are racing, chiefly with the assistance of American shoe-factory machinery. There is a tremendous development of electrical power, and the Russians are not yet clever in making delicate instruments. The ironworks are at full blast for girders; heavy rails and other

things are needed to meet railway requirements and the increase in the building trade. Before the war German imports were jumping, whilst those of Great Britain were slipping (£54,000,000 compared with £14,000,000). There are great *immediate* opportunities for Gospodin Ivan Bull.

We all know the tag, "you have only to scratch the Russian to reach the Tartar." He is the nicest, blandest, most generous fellow alive until he is riled, and then—well, you had better have an aeroplane handy to get out of his reach. The Tartars bossed Russia for several hundred years; the Golden Horde came from Tartary and whacked subservience into the dreamy Slav. But time has its revenges. The Slavs, many of them, are disgracefully wealthy and ostentatious, and they would feed you upon black pearls instead of caviare if they thought you could pleasurably digest them.

And the descendants of the Khans, the men who subjugated half Europe, are waiters—yes, waiters! They dress in white and with heads shaven stand by your chair at the Hermitage—which is a restaurant and not a monastic institution—whilst you make up your mind how you propose to pamper yourself with delicacies. There was a fat old Tartar who brought me my tea every afternoon—the real Russian beverage, amber hued, lemon tinctured, and served in a tumbler—when I sat in front of a café, blinked in the sun, and refused to buy a Moscow evening paper—and who could not understand why I would not gorge like the Russians on cakes.

IN THE RED SQUARE, MOSCOW

The grave and whiskered Russian will eat cakes with the appetite of an English flapper. The Russian has the sweetest tooth in the world. That is why he is never brought a sugar-basin when he orders tea or coffee, for he would scoop up the lot—and lump sugar is 18 kopecks the Russian pound (12 ounces), say 4½d. The Russian is given three, or maybe four, pieces of sugar on a tiny glass plate, and they all go. That I should take one piece and send the others back caused my fat friend from Tartary to gaze at me like a thought-reader.

Living is expensive in Moscow during these times of war. Even things grown in the neighbourhood are dear, because labour is scarce; so many men have gone to the front. All kinds of public works are at a standstill. The electric tramway service has been reduced by half. The prices of things in Russia always were high, even in peace time, and now charges climb like a thermometer on a broiling day.

How some labourers earning only 20 roubles a month (say £2) are able to exist is a problem. And it is the rarest thing to see a wizened, half-starved Russian. He and his wife look well nurtured, and their main fare is cabbage soup (sometimes with a scrap of cheap meat boiled in it), black bread, and tea. It is the *chorna kleb* (black bread) which does most. The outsider has got to get used to it, for there is a touch of sourness in it that repels; but I personally liked it.

House rent is dear. Folk don't have separate houses, as in England; they live in great blocks of

flats; tenement houses for the working classes. I know an artisan who, with his wife, has three moderate rooms to live in, and pays 15s. a week.

Folk in England who get their views of Russia from novels and melodrama have got the idea that the Russian is cunning; that diplomatists do their work by stealing dispatch boxes, and there is usually a tall and dark Russian adventuress, probably called the Countess Olga, who smokes cigarettes and fools the handsome secretary from the British Embassy. We know—or at least we knew before the war made us Allies—that for ways that are dark the Russian diplomatic service is peculiar. It is only the British that play the straightforward, above-board game.

Now I do not want to do an injustice to the Russians, but they are amongst the most simple-minded people I have ever come across. Only they do things in such a zigzag way, and the art of circumlocutory delay is carried to such perfection that some people think they are soaked in duplicity, whereas they simply do not understand the straight method.

If you want to know who is the deepest schemer in diplomacy, consult a Russian. In every case you will be told the Englishman. We are not in the habit of going into raptures over the mole-like skill of our Ambassadors and Ministers. Sometimes we feel they are easily hoodwinked and checkmated. But abroad, and especially in Russia, it is known that beneath that suave, frank manner, the let-us-

put-our-cards-on-the-table style, there is devilish ingenuity.

A Russian, referring to a late British Ambassador at Petrograd, said, "He had all the wiles of a Machiavelli without any of his vices." In the great shuffle of international cards it is the Englishman who wins, and you will not get a Russian to believe this is not because he has adroitly concealed the winning card up his sleeve. I think it true. The Englishman cheats his diplomatic competitors because he plays the open game when the rules are that he should play on the curve, and so his very openness deceives them.

The quaint conglomeration of Byzantine and Oriental architecture which you see within the walls of the Kremlin makes Moscow one of the individual cities of the world—it has characteristics which no other city can show. It is going to hold on to these, for they are her glory, and no Russian would any more think of pulling down the Kremlin than we would of destroying an old minster in order to provide for a Carnegie library.

But things that are supposed to be the mark of encroaching civilisation are travelling right up to the walls of Muscovy's old capital. Electric tramcars, single deckers, jangle in endless procession along the main streets.

If ladies buy hatpins, they have to be of merciful length, for if any Moscow woman mounts a Moscow car with a dagger protruding from her hat—the sort of thing which makes a brave Englishman blanch—

she is removed by the conductor under strict police orders. The telephone is everywhere, and there is no "put two pennies in the box, please." It is a very third-rate hotel in Moscow or Petrograd that has not a telephone in every bedroom.

Each evening at sundown, when the bells of the gorgeous churches are booming over the city, every little chapel—and there are hundreds of them—is crowded with standing worshippers, who light their candles and put them before the ikon of their favourite saint. The mitred and heavy-robed priests swing censers and chant in old Slavonic. The old men and old women and young women kneel and cross themselves and pray for the lads that are far away fighting for Russia.

Ah, say you, this is Moscow very little changed from conditions in peace times. Yes, that is Moscow. There is little on the surface to show Russia is at war—except the ghastly destruction of nearly every shop which carried a German name over the door. Russians told me they got the idea from England. And what England does must be right.

But every now and then one had a good laugh—and sometimes a frown followed. We have not forgotten "how the Russians went through England" in the first year of the war. The same story with another dress was told in Moscow. In a Moscow club, a man addressed the small assembly lounging in saddlebag chairs. "Have you heard that it's impossible to get along the line to Smolensk?" Most of us had not heard of it. One, however, had

A STREET CORNER SHRINE

heard something; the railway was rather jammed with troops and munitions going down to the Polish front.

"That's not it," said the first man confidentially; "it's the Japanese—yes. Japanese soldiers and big guns are being hurried down to Poland. I am acquainted with a general, and he should know. During the last three nights 240,000 Japanese and their guns have passed through Moscow."

"Ah yes, somebody did tell me something was happening," murmured a bearded man, tapping the cardboard end of his cigarette on the back of his hand, and then leaning forward for a match, "but it's well not to believe what you are told."

"But I know it's true," insisted the first man; "240,000 of them, and they've been brought across Siberia, and they've been taken round Moscow on the loop-line, and in the carriages with the blinds down. Of course nothing has appeared in the newspapers about it; censor wouldn't allow it, I suppose. Why, if a general doesn't know what's going on, who should—train after train of Japs, one every three minutes, and all the blinds down."

I smiled and puffed my pipe—it was the one bit of flagrant Britishism I displayed in Russia, though the imported tobacco did cost me half a crown an ounce—and recalled how in England, nine months before, we all knew the Russians had been landed in Scotland, and how for nights the London and North Western, the Midland, and the Great Northern lines were blocked with Cossacks,

whom we had not seen ourselves, though we all knew people who had the best authority for knowing it was true. Besides, what did Russia want the help of the Japanese for? It was certainly not from lack of men that Russia suffered!

"I don't know anything about that," pursued our informant, "but it is quite true about these Japs—they are going through by the loop-line, 240,000 of them, and in carriages with the blinds down. Go up to the station and see if you can purchase a ticket to Smolensk or Warsaw; that'll prove it."

In a few days all Moscow was talking about the Japanese army corps that had been taken through in the night. No one could say why the Japanese came, and no one declared they had seen them, but nearly everyone you met knew someone who hoisted their eyebrows and intimated they could tell a tale if it was not that the punishment was severe for revealing military secrets which might reach the German enemy.

Russia is a mysterious land, but as far as I could discover there was as much truth about Japanese in Russia as there was about Russians in England.

The speaking of German is a crime, and if you are caught at it you can be arrested and imprisoned. Every patriotic Russian has his ear on cock for the hated language. And it is not unnatural that many Russians not knowing German should mistake English for the accursed tongue—and that makes it very awkward for English folk.

The chaplain of the English church in Moscow was in a train with a friend when two Russians, an engineer and a lawyer, accused them of speaking German, and turned a gendarme on them. Denial was met with a contemptuous glare; the assertion that they did not know a word of German was proof they must be spies. Of course there had to be a protocol—nothing can be done in Russia without protocols; prolonged statements duly signed—and the two Russians, fulfilling a national duty, signed their story. But gradually it began to dawn on them that the two foreigners were really Englishmen, and that in accusing them of being Germans, they had subjected themselves to a heavy fine. So they began to retreat. Ah no! It was now the turn for the two Englishmen to be indignant, to insist on having a protocol against the two Russians. The lawyer tried to laugh the thing off. But he was not allowed. The whole party went to the station-master's office, and then, whilst the Russians were beg-pardoning and the lawyer singing low at the prospect of being summoned, and all Moscow knowing he could not tell the difference between German and English, the protocol was duly drawn up. The Russians also had to sign papers explaining apologetically, and then the Englishmen, honour satisfied, went off home.

I have met an Englishman who, sitting in a café, was hit in the face with an umbrella and called "a pig of a German" by a Russian woman. More than one Englishman has been taken to the police station

and detained until his identity has been proved. English ladies have been frequently insulted in shops. There were two English ladies in a tramcar, when a professor at the Moscow University—all officials in Russia wear the uniform of their rank—told them angrily to stop speaking German. One of the ladies who can speak Russian fluently, said to him in his own language: "You are a professor are you not?" "Yes." "Then you are the most ignorant professor in Moscow," she exclaimed, to be heard by everybody in the car, "for you are unable to tell the difference between German and English." The professor was so discomfited, and everybody so laughed at him, that he was obliged to make a speedy departure. It is only fair to state that frequently, when English folk have been insulted, Russians have turned on their own countrymen and abused them for being offensive to people who were their allies.

As Moscow is so fascinating a city I thought I would like to take a few snapshot photographs. "Impossible during war time," I was told. But I only wanted a few pictures of old churches and fat droshky drivers, and the great broken bell, and, maybe, one of the gates into the Kremlin. No matter; an instant arrest if a picture was taken of a tramcar, unless with special police permission. Oh, that would be easy enough, and I sent off a servant with my card to the nearest police-station. But alas! I would have to make special application to the Gradnachalnik, the Chief of the Police, and

my request must be stamped (the stamps cost 4s.) and then I would get my answer. Everything was done in proper style; but at the end of four days, as there was no answer I sent a servant to the Chancery to inquire. This place is open from eleven o'clock to one, and the place was crowded with all sorts and conditions of people wanting permissions. No answer to my application, for "the police were making inquiries." Twice, three times, four, five, and six times, did the servant go, and still the police were "making inquiries." The seventh occasion I went myself, and I was there three-quarters of an hour before eleven o'clock. The room was thronged. Folk who wanted to travel had to seek police permission, and some of the group had been coming every day for a fortnight, and could get no answer. One girl was in tears because she was a teacher, and wanted to return to her parents. "Inquiries were being made." Police permission to put an advertisement in the paper advertising lodgings had to be obtained. One man said he had facilitated things for himself with a few roubles to one of the officials. It was hinted to me that if I gave a ten rouble note (£1) I would find my application granted. I said I was not going to insult any Russian official with a bribe to do his duty—and was laughed at. In my case the answer Yes or No was to be given "to-morrow."

The next day the servant went—the eighth visit—and learned the police were still "making inquiries." Then it was necessary to write a most frigidly polite

letter to the Gradnachalnik, pointing out that I was a visitor, my time was short, and that whilst I recognised his right to refuse permission I would be obliged by an answer. No reply. Then I went to his office. His assistant knew nothing about it. He was most courteous, but I must go to the Chancery and get a paper that I had made application, and this must be brought to him, and then after proper inquiries had been made—oh, land of interminable delay!—I would get an answer; most certainly it would be Yes.

For the tenth time a servant went to the Chancery not to seek the permission, but to get returned a letter of recommendation from a very high-placed Russian official. I insisted on having that back. I have an idea that on looking up the papers and finding the recommendation (the signature of which had not been recognised at first) the authorities gave the first real consideration to my application. The "recommendation" was returned, there was intimation that permission was granted and I would receive it next morning.

I did, exactly three weeks after my first application. So, with the document in one pocket, my passport in the other, and with a button showing the Union Jack attached to my jacket—you cannot be too careful in Moscow—I could sally forth and take some pictures of old men selling fruit, of people crossing the road, of bulbous and evil-odoured droshky drivers, and maybe of a church or two.

Photograph by Avanzo & Co., Petrograd

THE MOSCOW MARKETS

CHAPTER XIII

A RUSSIAN COTTON MILL

In Central Russia is the Government of Vladimir. In Vladimir province is the town of Orechovo-Zouevo, and if you say "Owreck-of-vesuvio" quickly you get so near the correct pronunciation that it does not matter.

You may or may not find it on the map; but it is one of the most instructive places I visited in Russia.

The ordinary idea of the plains of Central Russia is an expanse of desolation with poor moudjiks, living semi-barbarian lives in wretched hovels made of unsawn tree trunks, and scraping a melancholy livelihood out of a grudging land.

Therefore, picture a place with big mills, Lancashire pattern, and towering chimney stacks reeking furiously. Think of being dumped down at the railway station, and as you motor along just as the work-people are returning from breakfast rubbing your eyes and exclaiming: "Bolton, by all that's wonderful!" For the men and the women are sauntering back to the mills with the waddle of real Lancashire folk, and they cast supercilious glances at a couple of most obvious foreigners lounging in a swagger [illegible] that belongs to "the boss." The men are

intelligent and greasy. The women are dressed the same as their Lancashire sisters, even to the shawls pinned over their heads. The younger girls are inclined to be frolicsome as they jostle one another. The older women are serious. Leaning against the walls near the mill gates is the usual *blasé* row.

The bell begins to clang, and only slowly do the people respond, but with gathering numbers, until with the final clang the last surge of the mob is through the gates, and the street is deserted save for a couple of men who are late, and are shut out and are swearing in Russian, which is the most expressive language in the world to swear in.

Some of the biggest woollen and cotton mills in the world are in Russia. There is no woollen mill in the West Riding of Yorkshire so stupendous as that of Messrs. Thornton, a little way out of Petrograd. At home we have nothing the size of the Danilovsky cotton mills. Then there are the cotton mills belonging to the Morosoff family, the largest being the Tverskai manufactory at Tver, which is on the main line between Petrograd and Moscow, the second largest the Nikolski manufactory at Orechovo-Zouevo, and the third at Bogorodsk.

I visited the middling sized place, and I ran into a state of things which has not its parallel in any cotton districts in the world, and I know those of England, France, the United States and India. And constantly I kept saying to my companions: "When I write about this it will be hard to make my own people in England believe such con-

exist in Russia." And what applies to the works at Orechovo-Zouevo extends to other big places in varying degree, with some things, judged from the British standpoint, I did not like at all, and others which won my unstinted admiration.

You will find the romance of industry in Russia as elsewhere. At the end of the eighteenth century, there was a Vladimir peasant named Savva Morosoff, who learnt silk weaving and then started a small business, not only to weave silk, but to turn out cotton and woollen goods.

His four sons continued the business, and it grew amazingly. Then the brothers dissolved partnership. Two of them started mills in Vladimir province, and to-day a population of over 80,000 inhabitants are directly or indirectly dependent on two firms.

Another brother set up works at Tver, and the fourth at Bogorodsk. The four firms of Morosoff, all having their origin in the enterprise of a peasant over a hundred years ago, now employ between them over 50,000 workpeople.

The works I specially visited were those of Vigoul Morosoff and Sons (though I was invited to the others) chiefly because in the British Club at Moscow I had made the acquaintance of an Englishman, Mr. James Charnock, who is a partner and the managing director of the mills.

The development has been such, that at Orechovo there are at the present time 15,000 people employed, and over 22,000 people housed by the firm.

Verily though Russia has big manufactories, it is

not a manufacturing country. There are no towns such as we understand them. Accordingly, when a great mill is constructed and workpeople needed, housing accommodation has to be provided by the millowners for their employees and families; schools and hospitals have to be erected, arrangements made for stores to be run on co-operative lines, doctors employed, and means of recreation provided.

There is little of the generation-to-generation families of textile workers. Ninety-five per cent. of the population of Russia are peasants, and nearly all the adults have their little bits of land which they cultivate during the months that are free from snow.

It is from this class that the cotton operatives are drawn. It is to be easily understood that they have nothing like the inherited knowledge or the acquired skill of the Lancashire people, who are pushed into the mills as half-timers when they are still small; whereas the law of Russia is ahead of the English law, for no person under fifteen years is permitted to work in a factory.

Men leave their small holdings and come into the manufacturing towns, whilst their wives run the farms. In the proper seasons they drop the cotton mills and return to their villages for a time. This chopping about from loom to land prevents them from being either first-class textile hands or farmers; but it is the only method that is practicable in Russia.

Of course, there are men without farms who work the year round in the mills. Young women who can

be spared are sent from the country into the mills. Also employees bring their wives and children. So whilst in Orschovo there are 15,000 workpeople, there are 22,000 to be looked after.

Each family is given two rooms in great blocks of tenement buildings. Personally, I strongly dislike the barrack system; it is too much like an asylum, and there is an absence of the individuality of the home. I cannot say the places I saw were savoury, for the Russian, from prince to peasant, has a horror of fresh air, and he refuses to open his windows. Still, I would not like to vote them below the miles of mean streets, where so many of our workpeople have to live in England with their wretched back-to-back houses. The mill hands of Russia are better built and healthier looking than their fellows in England, but this is due to the fact that they live part of the year in the villages.

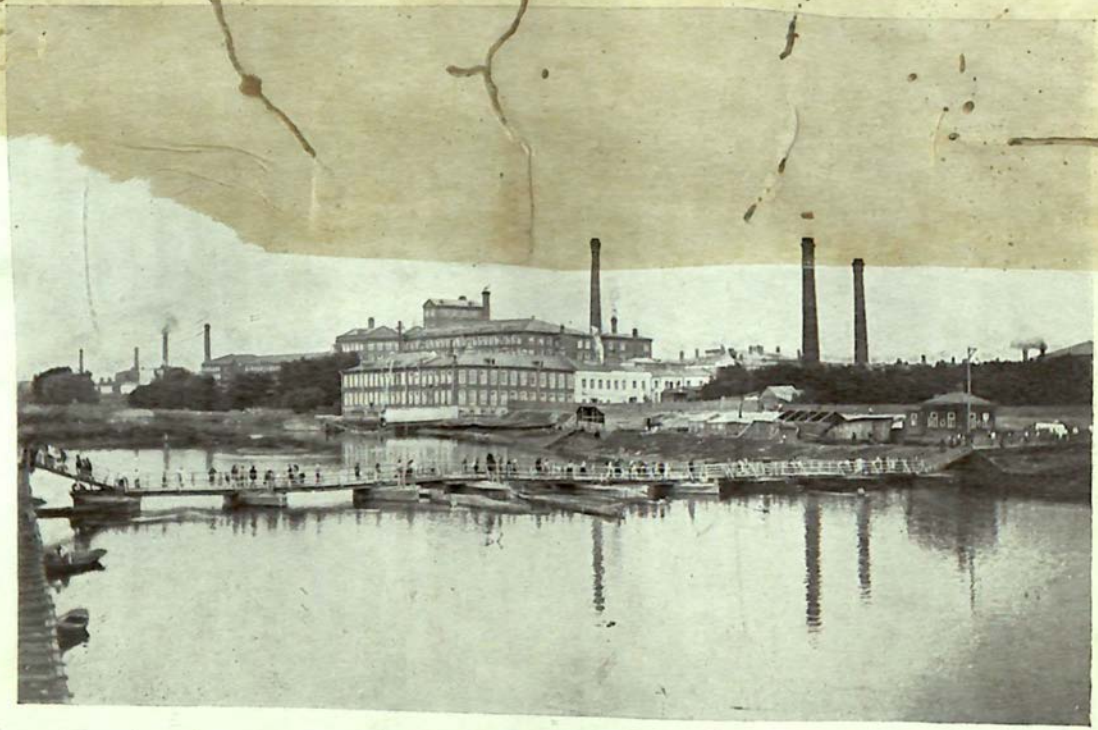
The government in Russia is called autocratic, but it is intended to be paternal. It practically says to the people: "Now behave yourselves, and all will be well." British people, especially those who do not know the Russian people, find it hopeless to endeavour to understand how that system of rule can satisfy. At times, there are explosions; but for the great mass of people it does satisfy. The majority of the Russians are quite unfitted for the political freedom which we have in England, though I quite recognise the application of the axiom: you can never learn to swim if you are prohibited from entering the water.

So the scheme of having the workpeople living in a sort of barrack yard, with everything found by the employers except food and clothing, and these to be obtained at the stores run by a committee, struck me as objectionable. It seems to place the workers too much under the thumb of the employers. Such a plan would never do in England. But I know Russia sufficiently well to know how circumstances alter cases, and to avoid the common mistake that what suits one country ought to suit another.

If there were the same open market in Russia as in England, there would be no housing accommodation for the workers except hovels erected by speculative rack-renters, and the employees would be the victims of a ring of storekeepers. The small shopkeeper has not a chance against the prices of the Orechovo co-operative stores.

Education is backward in Russia, but the firm provides excellent schooling. Instead of being dependent on casual doctors, there is a staff of most capable medical men. On the social side, things are done which would astonish Port Sunlight and Bournville, and other places which are supposed to be models of well-being. The point that I am making is that the whole thing is paternal. And although on principle I object to the paternal control of grown men, I appreciate its advantages for present day Russians, who are kindly and good workers, but not grown men in the broad meaning of the phrase.

The Vigoul Morosoff firm are manufacturers of finished cotton goods, spinning the yarn, weaving the



THE TOWN OF ORECHOVO-ZOUEVO

cloth, bleaching, dyeing, mercerising and printing it. The fuel for the mills is peat obtained from the firm's own fields several miles away, covering an enormous area and conveyed on a special light railroad. The mills contain 220,000 spindles and a proportionate number of looms, while large quantities of grey goods are brought from outside manufacturers for finishing purposes.

There is machinery for the making of velvets, muslins, imitation silks, corduroys and moleskins, cretonnes, shirtings, sewing cottons, hosiery and fancy yarns. I noticed that much of the machinery came from Hetheringtons of Manchester. Indeed, all the manufacturing machinery is English. All the driving power is provided by electrical appliances, and these are German. With an English manager ventilation is attended to, and as there is no steam power and special fans, I could not help remarking how pleasant was the atmosphere (it was a torrid, sweltering day) as I went through the screeching spinning halls.

In ability the Russian workers are a long way behind Englishmen. It takes ten Russian operatives to do what six English operatives can do. They are good workmen, but there is a failure amongst the "non-coms" of industry. A Russian may get ahead of his fellows in ability; but in control, in being the foreman of a gang, it is the most unusual thing for him to gain authority. This is one of the reasons why English foremen are so often introduced.

Now in regard to the side which impressed me

most. The firm has two fine hospitals employing five medical men, two lady doctors (women doctors are quite usual in Russia) and over twenty trained nurses. Medical attendance and medicine are free. There are two schools with over forty teachers, where more than 2,000 children of the work-people are educated free. The curriculum is the ordinary second-class Government elementary course, corresponding to the English sixth-standard public elementary school. At fifteen years the children can go into the mills; those who have special aptitudes are given special work, and promising pupils are helped to higher educational establishments and the universities. Many of the educational staff are old pupils, children of the workpeople. It struck me that the education is more practical than in England; all the classes receive instruction backwards from the finished article to the first ingredients. For instance, all the successive stages in the making of a hat are explained in detail.

The population of 22,000 on the firm's property have lodging, lighting and heating provided free, whilst the workpeople who live in their own villages, four, five, or six versts away, and cycle to and fro, get a monthly sum in lieu of lodging.

As many of the workers are women and married, there is a big, cheery crêche where the children are looked after by trained nurses—a much more blessed plan than the system in some parts of Lancashire.

Women are not allowed to work two weeks before and five weeks after childbirth. During the

seven weeks' absence, or longer if they are not strong enough to resume work, they receive two-thirds of full-time wages. This notwithstanding that they receive food when in the lying-in ward of the hospital, and there are no doctor's fees for confinement or nursing.

It is an interesting point that the birth-rate per 10,000 in the Vladimir Government is just a fraction below double what it is in Lancashire. There are almshouses for old workpeople, or if they go back to their villages they are pensioned.

All the workpeople are compulsorily insured. In case of illness half wages are paid. In case of partial or total disablement a valuation is paid after assessment by a committee consisting of representatives of the firm and employees, and presided over by the local government factory inspector.

Consider the social side. Mr. Charnock took me into the mill park, extensive, wooded, though the Russian climate does not allow for the beautiful gardening we have in England.

There are all the facilities for picnicking. There are special enclosures for the children. There is a closed theatre which holds 1,500 people, and the firm arranges for performances by travelling companies to present good drama.

Well-known public men are invited to give lantern and other lectures. There is also a summer theatre with an open-air stage, so Orechovo-Zouevo and his wife may sit and enjoy themselves on bright evenings and witness vaudeville performances.

There is a brass band, two string bands, four choirs, and several amateur dramatic societies. Russians love the dance, and there is a big dancing hall. There are athletic clubs. The pavilion attached to the athletic grounds was one of the best I have seen anywhere: roomy, with billiard tables, reading-rooms, refreshment rooms (teetotal), well-arranged dressing-rooms, and a broad balcony where members of the Pavilion Club can recline in big chairs on hot evenings.

The football field is quite as good as any to be found in England, but I forget the special triumphs the Orechovo Club has achieved. Mr. Charnock, like other Englishmen in Russia, has done much to stimulate a love of football amongst young Russians, and the game has caught on, though I believe the young Russian has still a good deal to learn about being "a good sportsman." Mr. Charnock whispered in my ear that football had done wonders. In former days the young fellows lounging round took to talking the politics of discontent against the "powers that be." He turned them on to football; they became as obsessed as Englishmen, and forgot all about pseudo-revolution. If the Russian Government wants to prevent young Russians from being moody, and to shake up their livers so that they don't dwell too much on regenerating politics, football clubs should be started in every industrial centre.

The firm sees to the supply of food in the stores, but the prices are fixed by the factory inspector, and this tends to restrain the profits of the local

shopkeepers. The co-operative stores run by committees of the workpeople pay on the average 7 per cent. on the purchases and sales and a dividend of 6 per cent. on the share capital.

Two shifts are worked at the mill a day, usually from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m., though on days before and after the holidays the hours are reduced.

The average number of working days in a year is 278, and the number of hours worked yearly is 2,250, thus giving an average working day of a little over eight hours, as compared with a working year of 302 days, or 2,825 hours, in England, say nine and a half hours daily. The engagement is not on a week's notice, but on a monthly contract, and a workman cannot be discharged within that period unless some act of his has endangered the safety of the works, or he has been absent without reasonable excuse for more than three days. Drunkenness used to be very frequent, but since the authorities have closed the spirit stores it has entirely disappeared.

Between 85 and 90 per cent. of the adult male workers own land and cottages in the village or commune to which they are attached, and to which they frequently return; 88 per cent. of the total number of workpeople have savings in the Government Post Office Bank, and, roughly speaking, the average deposits amount to £45.

Early marriage is the rule. Then the young husbands are called up for military service, and I was told that not all the young wives remaining at work in the mills are constant.

Comparing the conditions of labour with those in England, these great works at Orechovo have (roughly) 12 per cent. less working hours daily, 8 per cent. less working days in the year, and 20 per cent. less working hours in the year. On the other hand, the wages are 40 per cent. lower than in England. But as it requires 40 per cent. more labour to produce the same result, the actual cost of labour as represented by the result is very much the same in both countries.

As I expect this chapter will be read by the textile workers in England—naturally interested in labour conditions in the country of our Russian ally—I make no apology for giving precise details. Take the wages for an eight and a half hours' day. Women: In card room, 2s.; spinning-room, 2s.; doubling room, 2s.; weaving (three looms), 2s. 6d.; dye works, 1s. 9d. Men: spinners, 8s. 6d.; piecers, 2s. 6d.; weavers, 2s. 6d.; mechanics, 5s. Juveniles from 15 to 18 years get from 1s. to 1s. 6d. a day. These are small wages; but in addition the workpeople get housing, lighting, heating, baths, sick advances, school, and hospital attendance.

The cost of living is not great, except in the matter of tea (Chinese), for which 8s. 9d. per pound is paid. Black rye bread, which I have some recollection of hearing denounced in England—which I had with my dinner this evening, in the middle of writing this chapter in the country house of a Russian friend eight miles outside of Moscow, where I spent a week-end—costs ¾d. per English pound.

LEAVING THE WORKS OF ORECHOVO-ZOUEVO

White bread is 2d. per pound, beef 6d. and 5d. per pound, and pork 4d. per pound.

Clothing is very expensive. An artisan's suit cannot be bought for less than £2 10s.; boots are at least 12s. a pair; and a warm winter overcoat costs £4. Women's clothing is equally dear.

A far greater number of married women work in the Russian mills than in England. This is due to early marriage, the departure of the husband for military service leaving the wife unprovided for, and to the barrack system, which is a present necessity, but which nobody likes, and to the low standard of men's wages, which is the consequence of their inability to do not much more than half the work an English operative can do. A spare number of women workers have to be kept because of the absence of women increasing the birth-rate. Owing to the excellent crêche arrangements all the children are breast-fed.

Do not imagine these Russian mill hands are dressed after the manner of Russians as depicted in illustrated journals by imaginative artists. They dress very much the same as English workpeople, except that many men wear top boots, have a peaked cap, and a high-buttoned coloured shirt. The mill lasses don't mind what they wear in the mill; but on public holidays—oh, recollections of Blackpool!—the Russian girl is up-to-date, and sniffs at the national costume, and must have something which she believes is a Paris model. See a throng of these girls on a railway platform on a

Sunday evening—the railway platform is the chief place of promenade in Russia on a Sunday evening as the High Street is in most English towns—and you have to think twice before you remember you are not in Lancashire, but in Vladimir in Central Russia.

What I have described has its counterparts, with improvements no doubt, in other districts of Russia. But nowhere outside Russia is there such paternal control by a great firm over 22,000 souls. The plan has its serious objections, but it has its good features.

The thing that is instructive is not so much that there should be such things, but that they should exist in Russia, which you see has another side of life to show besides that depicted in sensational novels.

CHAPTER XIV

CO-OPERATION AND CO-PARTNERSHIP

When I was in Siberia fourteen years ago the business incompetence of the farmer was saddening. Here was the twin-country of Canada, just revealing its enormous agricultural possibilities, and the Russian apparently incapable of seizing its advantages. Land was to be got for the asking, and a much-abused Government was willing to assist the peasantry to obtain modern machinery on the instalment plan—but it all seemed hopeless.

I remember at Omsk—then beginning its career as the centre of the Siberian butter industry—finding that every one of the big firms were either Danish or Jewish. Even in the "black earth" regions of Southern Russia, in rich Bessarabia, where the land was so easily fruitful in wheat, the villages were unkempt and neglected in contrast to the neatness to be found in the German settlements. The Russians were disinclined to ranch life, such as we know it in America; they lived in villages, rather carelessly tilled the ground in their district, and left the rest to waste.

This was partly due to the village communal system, happy as an ideal, but quite useless to secure the individual giving his full energies to the

cultivation of the farm. Land laws during recent years, however, have done much to improve this, so that there is not a peasant who cannot have his bit of land—it may be limited to twelve or twenty acres—which he can call his very own, and the produce of which is for the benefit of his family.

Things are far from being what they ought to be. With the warmest affection for the simple qualities of the moudjik, I must say he is still one of the worst farmers in the world. Ignorance is the cause of much of this, but there is also an inertness, a slackness, which can only be eradicated through the agency of example and ambition. Amiably improvident, the small landowner has long been the prey of the Jewish wheat speculator. The representatives of this gentleman travel through the country and find little difficulty in inducing the needy and hard-pressed farmer to dispose of next autumn's wheat crop at a cheap rate in return for immediate money.

But changes are at work, and improvements have been made which, without being striking in themselves, are remarkable when present-day conditions are compared with those which existed fifteen years ago. Agricultural co-operative societies, together with the assistance of rural banks, are gradually working for a better state of things. The co-operative movement amongst farmers has unquestionably "caught on." All over the Empire these societies have been established, and the farmer, instead of being compelled to sell his goods to dealers, who

have an arrangement amongst themselves, has his produce handled by a society which, acting in conjunction with neighbouring societies, can secure the legitimate market value and not be dependent on the manœuvres of local speculators. In no phase of agriculture is this more striking than in dairying. In Siberia particularly, and in association with the butter industry, foreign firms have been obliterated and the dealer who was eager to squeeze the peasant has little chance. For now the farmer sends his butter and his eggs to the co-operative society, which knows what is the price of Siberian butter in London—it is invariably sold to Londoners as Danish—and so he can secure a fair return.

Though generally backward, it must be said that the Russian always has an open mind for new ideas. He is full of enthusiasm for co-operation. In the manufacturing areas, particularly around Moscow, co-operative stores have been established, to the dismay and frequent ruin of the private trader. The price of food has much increased in war times; but the co-operative societies have had a steadying influence, and in industrial towns there has been frequent wreckage of the shops of private traders because the prices were much higher than at the co-operative stores in adjoining towns—not always due to grasping on the part of the small trader, who is frequently the victim of the wholesale houses—for high prices in Russia are quite as much due to the holding up of supplies as to shortage—but because by concerted action and by having a wider

market to draw upon the co-operative societies can exercise pressure.

At the present time there are something like 12,000 co-operative societies in Russia, and their popularity is evidenced by the fact that within the last few years the number has increased by 25 per cent. over each preceding year. The central body, the Moscow Union of Co-operative Societies, maintains a depot for wholesale goods, and from this local stores draw their supplies. Credit is easier than with independent wholesale houses, and as so many things in Russia have to be obtained from abroad, requirements are combined and goods are purchased in bulk.

The Union is now developing a scheme for instituting its own workshops. There is a special bureau, not only for drawing up reports on trade, but for preparing literature to advance the principles of co-operation. A pension fund has been established for the employees of societies, and public recognition of co-operation is given by the Union being represented on the Government committee for village savings banks and industrial societies. So strong is the Union becoming, that it is beginning to exercise influence in politics. It keeps in touch with members of the Duma, and at the present time is trying to form a special group of members of the Duma to watch the interests of the co-operative movement.

When it is known that a town, hitherto unprovided for, is showing an inclination to have a co-operative store, an instructor is sent from the

head office to assist in establishing a branch, to explain how purchases should be planned, and how there should be co-operation with other societies in the same district. There are constant exhibitions—movable exhibitions passed on from town to town—and lecturers, armed with lantern slides, travel around giving instructive addresses. A co-operative school, practical as well as theoretical, has been started in conjunction with the People's University (usually known as Shaniasky's University). There is a statistical bureau, and the Union has taken up the publication of literature to assist in the social work of the Zemstvos.

All this is the outcome of a few years of work. As I have indicated, the Russian is always willing to consider new ideas. He is more inclined than the Briton to devote time in the development of a theory instead of swiftly getting down to practice. The theories concerning co-partnership and profit-sharing as a means of avoiding antagonism between capital and labour, are quite as far advanced as they are in England, and I would be in no way surprised if the principles of co-partnership were put into operation on an extensive scale in Russia.

For be it remembered, that nowhere in the world is the relationship between employer and employed so democratic as it is in Russia. Notwithstanding the prohibition against trade unions—though to the lay mind the co-operative movement, blessed by the Government, is first cousin to a trade union—and the fierce industrial wars occasionally waged, the personal

—I had almost written friendship—the personal freedom in talk between masters and men is more frank and generous than in Britain, America, or in any of the industrial nations.

Like most folk who know Russia, I have often found myself casually pleased with the quaint colouring in the clothing of the peasant women, the woodwork ornaments which have a blend of Byzantine ornateness and northern simplicity, and sometimes I have been amused at the ingenuity of Russian toys. But I am afraid I thought no more of the people who make these things than I do about the individuals who make the lead pencils with which I write. But, spending a holiday at the *datcha* of a friend—a log-built country house in the woods within easy reach of Moscow—I paid a compliment to my hostess by remarking how all the furniture, the decorations, the curiously-woven cloths on the table, seemed to be in happy keeping with the Russian house. "Yes," madame replied, "and everything has been made by the peasants —by the *koustari*." It was that remark which put me on the trail of one of the most charming features of Russian life—the peasant industries.

Most of the country lies under snow during long months, and tilling the land is out of the question. Villages are untold distances from each other, and as there is little education, and the big landed proprietors do not take the same interest in the welfare of the countryside as they do, for instance, in England, one can imagine the kind of sluggish existence there

must be during the dark winter. For reasons difficult to trace back to their origin, certain districts have developed particular aptitudes; for instance, in one region we find a considerable section of the peasantry spending part of the winter in making ikons (holy pictures), whilst in another all the women, from generation to generation, have been skilful in making lace. These special features of rural Russia were occasional, without organisation, and sporadic. But they were the basis of the Russian *koustari*, the peasant industries which are being encouraged by the provincial governments, rousing the latent skill of the moudjik and his family, and bringing occupation and pence to hundreds of thousands of poor folk who need both.

In England, one sometimes reads about the efforts which are made to revive rural industries, and titled ladies have exhibitions in their London residences of the clever things that are made by quite simple people who live in distant shires. These excellent souls—and particularly those people who think Russia has everything to learn and nothing to teach—should be carried on the magic carpet to Muscovy to study the *koustari*. The equivalent to our County Councils look upon this development of peasant industries as a most important growth of national life. Many of the most charming and artistic people in Russia are zealously concerning themselves in keeping the village art pure, and saving characteristic Russian designs from becoming debased. I spent a captivating morning in a little museum

in Moscow, where there is a collection of the real old articles of Russian manufacture in embroidery, furniture, carving, household decorations, so that those at the head of the *koustari* schools all over the country may have the correct designs to follow. Many of the most distinguished people in Russia are working enthusiastically for this revival of peasant industry. It is not a hobby; it has gone far beyond being a pastime with occasional displays of work for leisured people to inspect and exclaim, "How interesting!" The *koustari* is an established and important fact in rural Russia.

Agriculture is the staple industry, and the *koustari* therefore is special work in small manufacture which the peasants are taught by County Council classes. Here and there the demand outgrows the productivity of a cottage, and then you come across the enterprising peasant starting a small factory and employing workers. Then there is the dealer who provides the semi-raw material to the peasants to work upon at home, and who purchases the article when it is completed. So tremendous has been the success of the *koustari* organisations—in practically every case started and run by the local authorities—that it is calculated that there are to-day 7,500,000 peasants in Russia occupying what was formerly their "spare time" in making such articles as can be conveniently manufactured in the cottage, to the annual value of £160,000,000.

The moral effect on the Russian rural mind, turning it during the winter months to useful manu-

DRAWN THREAD WORK BY WOMEN

factures, stimulating inventiveness and keeping the artistic sense clean—for I believe all the sale shops of the *koustari* are under the control of the provincial governments—is incalculable. Here you have the peasantry of a nation saved from the ennui and the torpor consequent on non-occupation, and the eye and the hand are trained in usefulness. Though the *koustari* industry has aroused no interest amongst foreign students of Russian affairs, I am convinced that it will have an increasing effect in steadying the Russian character into channels of industrial usefulness. Hitherto the Russian has been too much of a mental wanderer to achieve success in mechanics.

The variety of work of the *koustari* varies from the manufacture of agricultural machines to the cutting of precious stones. Sometimes the *koustar* makes bird-cages; at other times he joins with his mates in the building of barges. He may devote his evenings to the carving of dolls, whilst a brother may make a graveyard monument. The *koustar* is skilled in producing pottery, which his daughter paints. Just as the co-operative movement is spreading in respect to purchasing necessities, the same scheme is operative amongst the *koustars*, who join their funds, start small factories, and on the communal system share the profits in the manufacture of samovars, watches, knives, nails, and half a hundred other things.

As Russia has such immense forests, and wooden articles are more in use in agricultural Russia than elsewhere, the chief products of the *koustari* are in

wood. Furniture in the old Russian style is a feature of the *koustari* in the Moscow government. It is reckoned that one hundred million wooden spoons are used yearly in Russia—those who have visited outlying parts know how rare a metal spoon is—and most of these are painted by hand with primitive designs. The chief work in this way is in the region of Nijni-Novgorod, and two men, one doing rough work and the other finishing, will turn out about three hundred spoons a day. Twenty million sets of wheels are required annually, and at least a hundred thousand workmen are engaged in making them. Exquisite and curiously patterned silver work is the characteristic of the government of Kazan.

Then there is textile work. The most primitive weaving frames are used by the peasants in their cottages, but the material produced is of excellent quality. Sixty thousand families are engaged round about Moscow in the home manufacture of textiles. Russian ladies have got the women interested in embroideries and lace, and I was told by a lady devoting her whole time to furthering peasant industries, that no fewer than 50,000 women in the villages are now making lace to the value of £3,200,000 a year. The implements used are simple—a round cushion, spindle, and pins. The lace is often of delicate workmanship, and is made of unbleached thread, white, blue, or red cotton, white, black, or pink silk. The designs are traditions " permeated by the poetic influence of centuries of peaceful work, and accomplished under the sound of sad melodies,

before the faint light of a resin burner," says a Russian writer. Go into the governments of Vladimir and Koursk, and visit the widely scattered villages in winter time, and it will be difficult to enter a hut where some member of the family is not making a holy picture, an ikon. These ikons are on wood. The paintings are in accord with peasant standards during centuries. One cottager may paint the background, whilst another paints the face and another the hands, whilst still others paint the garments and inscriptions. Two millions of these ikons are made each year.

It is no good quoting names, because they will probably be unknown to British readers; but I would like to say that all the leading artists in Russia have given their services in providing designs which will be beautiful, and at the same time not depart from tradition. Many ladies have started workshops in their own villages, and what is so surprising is the quick way the heavy, thick-fingered moudjik will learn to make a dainty article.

The earnings of the *koustars* are trifling. Were great factories to take to the manufacture of *koustari* wares the individuality which the hand-made article possesses would disappear. But in price the peasant could probably defeat the big manufacturer. The small industry is a subsidiary occupation for the little farmer. As the peasant is satisfied with small returns he can compete with the big manufacturer. The Russian central Government is doing a good deal to encourage the *koustari*. It sends out

specialists to teach villagers how to make things; it publishes pamphlets of designs, sells to household manufacturers the needed raw material, and puts them into communication with the stores in cities where they may sell their products outright or on commission.

But it is the Zemstvos—of which there are thirty-four in European Russia—which are doing the great work. They are spending five times as much for the encouragement of small industries as does the central Government. They all work together and on a plan. Instead of each Zemstvo "running its own show," it devotes special attention to one branch of the subject. One attends to the technical side of *koustari* work; another considers means for selling goods; a third organises popular credit for household manufacturers; a fourth attends to getting low-priced raw material, and so on. The Zemstvos work in co-operation and not in competition. In this way the Nijni-Novgorod Zemstvo started a depot to buy raw material at wholesale prices, particularly metals from the State factories, and these are retailed at cost price to the *koustari*. The Zemstvo of Tver encourages the organisation of co-operative societies to sell peasant wares. The Perm Zemstvo started a special loan bank to assist peasants taking up small industries; the Zemstvo of Koursk organises community workshops for the execution of Government orders, such as bootmaking.

The Moscow Zemstvo is a model to the whole

A TOY-SELLER

country. Its museum of ancient designs is alongside stores where you may purchase excellent reproductions. The peasant worker can always apply to the authorities for raw material, and be sure to get it at cost price. There is an abundant market for the articles made, and it is becoming quite the correct thing in better-class Russian houses to have at least one room furnished by *koustari* goods. As I have mentioned, I have stayed in a *datcha* where everything was the product of the *koustari*. When I saw what was being done in home manufacture I could understand the enthusiasm of my Russian friends, who feel that the movement will lead to great things in the uplifting of the peasantry.

CHAPTER XV

THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL OF MOSCOW

We were in the Kremlin, the holy of holies in Muscovy. Looking beyond the dull red walls with dull green roofs to the towers, we watched a hundred golden crosses above the churches gleaming in the afternoon sunshine.

"And what is that great building?" I asked, pointing across the Mockva River to a huge structure like a whitewashed Buckingham Palace, but twice as large.

"Oh, that is the Foundling Hospital," was the reply. Had my friend been there? No! He had lived many years in Moscow, and had never been to the Foundling Hospital. He did not know anybody who had. I made inquiries, and could find no one who knew anything about the Foundling Hospital except what its name implied. And when I went to it the visitors' book showed that the last time an entry was made was over eleven months before.

Yet it is unique; there is no place in the world like it. Catherine II., of variegated memory, hearing that many hundreds of babies were left to die in the streets of Moscow, founded the home. It was opened on her birthday, April 21st, 1764, and the

first foundling was christened Catherine and the second Paul. That year 523 foundlings and illegitimate children were admitted. Now 13,000 children a year pass through the hospital. On the morning I was there I saw 4,175 mites, all between a week and a year old.

Walking through the wards, with hundreds of nurses holding their charges, was like reviewing a regiment of babies. Including the little ones, the hospital has a population of nearly seven thousand. It costs about £120,000 a year to maintain the place and pay for the keep of children homed-out. Most of the income is derived from—where would you guess?—from a heavy tax on playing-cards and from the profits of the State pawnshops! There are no private pawnshops in Russia, but the State will lend you money on anything from your house to your watch.

A polite old lady, the matron, was courteous enough to show round the hospital myself and two Moscow ladies who accompanied me. There was much that was pathetic and a good deal which appealed to the soft side of one's nature. Some of the babies were gurgling happily; others were shrivelled little things with peaky faces; some were dozing in their cots; many were kicking and screaming; most were at the breast of their wet nurses, who in the majority of cases are peasant girls.

In the reception-room were two young mothers handing over their illegitimate children to the institution. No questions are asked except the

child's name, and whether it has been baptised. Sometimes mothers hand their babies over to the porter at the gate; they are never refused, but in that case the mother loses all trace of the child, for it is numbered and a name given it according to the thought of the first nurse who receives it. But when a mother herself presents a child she receives a blue ticket if a boy and a pink ticket if a girl, numbered, and to a little chain to go round the infant's neck is attached a bone counter on which is its number—I saw the docketing of "4560—1915"—and on the other side a cross is engraved. Near the institution is a lying-in hospital, where, without any charge whatever and without any inquiries, babies can be brought into the world; and the mother, if she desires to hide her identity, can wear a mask whenever she likes. If she wishes, the child can be immediately removed, passed to a wet nurse in the hospital, and she never know anything more about it. Indeed, there is a secret maternity ward where a girl may come and have a baby and nobody know anything about it.

A girl, if she likes, can nurse her own child in the hospital and receive food and one shilling a day payment; but she must undertake, as soon as the baby is weaned and homed-out in a village, that she remains two months to nurse other children. All the little ones are foundlings, or illegitimate, or the offspring of widows whose husbands have recently died. Of course, many of the foundlings must be the children of married people, but no

child of any known married woman is admitted. As all women, like all men in Russia, have passports, it is quite impossible for a married woman to pretend she is single.

Anyway, the mother gets a card with the number of her baby upon it. At any time within seven years she can reclaim her boy or girl, and the village foster-parents, who have received payment for the child's keep, must hand it over. This is not at all unusual, for, when the girls subsequently marry, their early lapse is often overlooked, and the husband consents to the child being brought into the home; often, also, he is the father of the child, but has been away on military service, and on his return he marries and gets the child back again. If, however, the little one is not claimed before it is seven years of age the parent cannot have it back without the consent of the foster-parents, who may have got very fond of the boy or girl and do not want to lose it. If the claim is not made till after the child is twelve years of age, then its consent, as well as the consent of the foster-parents, must be obtained.

The matron told me how a few weeks before a well-dressed lady came to the hospital, and said that sixteen years previously she had handed a baby girl over, and now that she was wealthy—"and turned religious," added the matron—she wished to have her daughter back. As she had her pink card it was without much difficulty that the girl was traced to a distant village, where she was living

with a couple. The lady went and saw her, wanted her to come and live with her, and promised her luxury. But her daughter said, "I don't know you; I've always looked upon these people as my parents; they've been very good to me, and I love them." And the rich woman went away sad-hearted, for the girl remained with the peasants.

There was a room in which a dozen stout-built young women in short red skirts and loose white tunics and lawn caps were dandling a dozen tiny tots—all of them foundlings in Moscow during the previous night, found on doorsteps, in gardens, in railway carriages. To two of them had been pinned their baptismal certificates, with Christian names attached. The youngsters had been bathed, and put in hospital clothing, and were happy with their new mothers, and were crooning with baby joy—but nameless, parentless, the jetsam of a great city, blessedly too young to have the knowledge which brings sorrow.

In the centre of the building is a sombrely ornate chapel of the Russian Orthodox Church, heavily gilded, and with many sacred pictures. Here on Sunday come hundreds of the nurses with the babies to receive the benedictions of the impressively garbed and bearded priests. My visit was on a Wednesday, and in an adjoining small chapel were some fifty young women, all in the fixed peasants' uniform of the hospital and with babies at their breasts, the women chattering and half the babies crying. Every child was one of the foundlings

THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, MOSCOW

picked up since the previous Saturday, and they were brought naked save for a little blanket in which they were wrapped to be baptised. Twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, there is a baptismal service for all the foundlings brought in during the previous few days. The name to be given is pinned on the little blanket, and after much intoning by the priest each girl goes forward and the priest, taking the infant in his arms, completely submerges the baby three times in a massive silver font, and so a new soul is placed under the jurisdiction of Mother Church.

Storey above storey rises the Foundling Hospital, and ward opens into ward along both sides of long corridors. As we entered a ward all the nurses rose and curtsied, and the superintendent hastened forward to give greeting. With plenty of space, there were two long rows of muslin-covered cots. Before them stood the nurses, mostly with an infant in arms. Despite the pleasant uniforms of the women, neat and all clean, and with caps of different colours according to their wards, they had that meek, patient look which is the characteristic of the Russian peasantry. Some of them were mere girls; others were sturdy women. They were nursing the infants —several of the stronger women could feed two infants —or standing by the cot soothing the restless little lump of pink humanity or watching over it whilst it slept. There is a big bathroom attached to each ward, and here the needs of the youngsters are looked after. Before each cot is a box which con-

tains the necessary clothing for the baby, and also serves as a seat for the nurse. All the nurses have to be able to attend to the child at the breast or they are no use. Though many of the girls are attending to their own babies, or feeding other children after their own have been taken from them, some of the nurses are married women, who, having lost their own offspring by death, come into the hospital for a few months to earn money by suckling little outcasts.

One of the strict rules of the establishment is that there must be no swaddling. The wet nurses generally want to swaddle, and there is constantly something like a tussle going on between the superintendent of the ward and the nurses who think they know what is best. Every week the children are weighed, and I visited one ward on weighing day. A queue of women was slowly passing a table, on which were scales with a scoop kind of receiver, and the baby, generally with a protest, was laid naked on a bit of flannel, and the weight entered on the nurse's card and also in a book. In one room was a row of incubators where the weaklings are placed.

It was a stifling hot day, and not a single window was opened. The atmosphere, therefore, was not fresh. A courteous suggestion of mine that it would be much better for the children if the windows were opened, only provoked the protest that it would be cruel to expose such little babies to draughts. The nurses go out into the gardens of the hospital for a few hours each day, but the children are kept in the

A DATCHA

wards for months without being taken into the open, unless it is their good fortune to be sent during summer time to one or other of the little cottages in the grounds, rather like summer-houses, where, of course, they get plenty of air.

It is well known there is a tremendous mortality amongst these children after they have been handed over to foster-parents in the country. I cannot help thinking much of this is due to the sudden transference of babies from the hothouse atmosphere of the hospital to the village huts. The matron admitted the appalling mortality, but ascribed it to malnutrition, for, though care was taken to find suitable folk to take the children (for which they are paid 10s. a month for each child), it is hard to overcome the ignorance of the peasants.

In former times, when serfdom existed in Russia, these illegitimate children were all "fathered" by the Crown. As they grew up they were transferred to "colonies of the Crown," and marriages were arranged between the young men and women; each couple was given a stretch of land, a furnished house, a horse, a cow, and some sheep, and they paid no taxes. That system, however, has disappeared for over half a century. Technically the Governor of Moscow is the guardian of the hundreds of thousands of children who pass through the portals of the hospital.

These little illegitimates are better looked after than peasant children born in wedlock. The authorities keep in touch with the children, and

there is special care over their education. Some of the girls as they grow up, return to the hospital as servants, and remain for even fifty or sixty years, so that their whole life is spent in association with the establishment. There are special training schools for the boys and girls to learn thirty-six different kinds of occupation. The lads mostly become artisans, some pupils showing aptitude learn foreign languages, and the girls become governesses, and the young men pass into the professional classes. The elder girls make all the clothing required in the hospital. Those specially suitable are taught dancing, and in time pass into the Imperial Ballet. The hospital keeps a hand on the young men till they are twenty-one, and at the age of twenty the young women are free from all obligation.

I have heard it contended that such a hospital encourages immorality. I do not believe it, though I am not going to argue the point. It certainly prevents child-murder. But one could not help being saddened at seeing those thousands of puny children, coming into the world in sin, and half of them destined to die when they are put under the kindly but ignorant care of peasants. It is unique amongst the charitable institutions in the world.

CHAPTER XVI

SOCIAL LIFE

It is to be borne in mind that what is known as "the nobility" in Russia is the new nobility which includes all those who have entered Government service—the youth who has graduated at a University steps on to the first rung of the social ladder whatever his origin. The ancient nobility, the class who owned the land and the serf, has fallen on hard times since the emancipation, and has almost ceased to exist as a class.

Russian nobles are as common as blackberries, owing to the fact that a title passes from the father to every member of the family, male or female. Thus, every daughter of a Prince is a Princess as well as every son a Prince. On the same principle the estate is left to all the sons instead of to the elder. As an estate cannot, unendingly, be multiplied or divided like a title without diminishing the individual share, this absence of a law of primogeniture proved the undoing of the Russian nobility. Daughters benefit only to the extent of one-fourteenth of the property, but they are provided with a dowry that often makes them come off better than their brothers.

There are no feudal castles in Russia, no historic

homes. The country houses are generally built of wood and are constantly being burned down. Ancient families do not bear the name of a place. There is nothing answering to a title like "Earl of Warwick," or corresponding to the French *de* or the German *von*. Prince, by the way, is the only real native title. Count and Baron have no equivalent in the Russian language.

A social class is represented by the *odnodvortsy*, or "one estate man." This is the freest man in Russia. He is subject neither to the communal system nor to officialdom, which passes him over. The old nobility, however, have become more or less submerged in the official class.

The merchant class is recruited from the old nobility and the peasantry. Peter the Great prevented the old nobility from engaging in commerce by forcing them to serve the State; this practically placed commerce in the hands of foreigners. The native merchant came into being after the emancipation of the serfs, and there are millionaire merchants to-day who were born serfs. The merchants are a distinct class. They pay prescribed dues to be enrolled, and are sub-divided into guilds which rank according to the amount of dues that they contribute to the State. The highest class has the privilege of trading anywhere in the Empire or abroad. A rich merchant may be all but illiterate. He always likes to entertain an official in a uniform. His sons may prefer to become officials and to wear uniforms to remaining in trade. But that is the Petrograd

merchant. The Moscow merchant is proud of his position, and has no hankerings after an official title like his Petrograd brother.

The "intelligent" middle-class considers itself to be the backbone of the nation. It is really the professional class. Members of the free professions—that is, not under Government control—make up the *Intelligentzia.*

Russia, therefore, possesses three classes, the nobility, the peasantry, and the intelligentry. As a Government examination will admit a peasant into the nobility, so a smattering of knowledge will make him one of the *Intelligentzia.* The "Intellectuals" are earnest, unaffected people, usually revolutionary in their ideals. They are worshippers of ideas. The People is their idol. To educate and uplift the People is the great aim of their lives. There is no pose about them. There is no more delightful place in Russia than the drawing-room of an "Intellectual" where ideas are being exchanged over tea and cakes.

Co-education has been the means of abolishing Mrs. Grundy. The girl attendant at the University is absolutely free and easy in her relations with her male "comrade." She eats her sausage and drinks tea in his rooms, and discusses the regeneration of Russia. Women are not excluded from the social clubs. Even in high society the chaperon no longer exists. The Russians are altogether simpler in their ways than we are. Evening dress is not required in the theatres nor at the dinner-table. A Russian dance is a jolly affair, for you may dance a dozen

times with the same girl, if you will, and nobody says anything. The Court balls, of course, are stiff functions. Low necks appear there, but at a private party a woman may dress as simply as she pleases. All men with official rank wear a uniform on all occasions. There are very few men out of uniform in the upper classes.

A Russian wedding is a charming affair. Crowning the bride and bridegroom is a pretty ceremony, which takes place when the knot is tied. Everyone has to be married in church in Russia. No marriage before a registrar exists. Couples who dispense with the blessing of the Church are not, however, boycotted. Their union is termed a "civil marriage" and receives recognition.

The coming of winter is approached in a business-like way. First of all, a gang of workmen take possession of a house or flat—most Petrograd people live in the latter, either one floor of an old mansion or a flat in a huge modern building with a quadrangle. It is the workmen's business to replace the double windows that have been removed for the summer months, and to stop up every nook or cranny with putty. One small pane alone is made to open, and that will be only for a few minutes at a time, for cold air is an abomination. The stove is a monumental affair, but the stove has a great part to play. It is a highly scientific piece of machinery. It reaches nearly up to the ceiling, and is made to heat two rooms. The lower part is a sort of fire-box. This is filled with wood. The flames,

THE DEPTH OF WINTER

when the wood has become aglow, shoot up and wander through various passages in the huge stove until the whole is giving out heat. Filled in the morning with birch wood fuel, a stove will retain its heat for twenty-four hours. No one is ever cold indoors in Russia. Woollen underclothing, therefore, is rarely worn. There is little necessity for it. All a Russian's wraps are for out of doors. When a call is paid the guest sheds his or her garments in a vestibule which is built for the purpose—a kind of dressing, or rather undressing, room. Overcoats, gloves, and overshoes will be left here, and the visitor enters clad in such light or dainty array as may suit the occasion.

No Russian dreams of taking walking exercise in the winter. They get out of the habit when summer makes it possible to indulge in it. Every moderately well-to-do person keeps a carriage or carriages. It is regarded as a simple necessity of life.

Very late hours are kept. Dinner generally occurs at about five o'clock in the afternoon. After dinner there is a siesta which freshens up the family for the dissipations of the night, which may be a visit to a theatre and a café supper with music, or cards at home till dawn. If you call on a Russian family at tea-time you may reasonably expect to stay to supper and to leave in the small hours.

There is a certain type of well-to-do gentleman, wearing a uniform, that you may meet in Petrograd. If one asks him anything about the country,

in the bucolic sense of the word, his ignorance is amazing. He has barely heard of Great Russia. He has heard of the Duma, of course, possibly of the Zemstvos; but he all but asks you, "What is *mir?*" If you should meet this person you may be fairly sure that he is a landed proprietor—a noble farming the land of his forbears in the summer months and clad in a grey cotton blouse. It is simply a little piece of affectation. But his type is disappearing. The new Russian is ceasing to be ashamed of the real Russian. It is being realised that Russia will, and can, stand on her own merits.

Stone houses are not considered healthy in Russia. That is partly why the country houses are built of wood. The westerner will be struck by the neglected state of the park land surrounding the country house of a nobleman. The house itself may be elegantly furnished in European style, and fitted with all sorts of luxurious appointments, and the approach be a rough meadow used as grazing land for the cattle. If the house is still in the hands of the old family, there will be a charming relationship between the landlord and the peasant. From the latter he never expects to get rent, but at harvest time the peasants will give him their labour to get in his crop in return for their food and a portion of the crop.

Some of the nobility spend their winter on their estates with their families. When the snow comes the life is pleasant enough, sleighing over the crisp snow-fields; but between times a dismal swamp

will isolate the country house in the completest manner.

The lady who drives about Petrograd behind her fast coachman, and plays cards till the small hours, or who discusses Kant and terrifies one with her knowledge of international literature becomes the most efficient of housewives in the country—a model farmer and champion poultry-raiser. The servants are on excellent terms with the *Barina*. Kissing the hem of her dress is by no means a sign of servility—even when it is done as an apology after some offence such as smashing the best china, and does not imply that the servants are not on the easiest terms with their mistress. The upper servants will enter the room without knocking, as a matter of course. The village between-maid, on the contrary, will not even dare to tap, but scratches on the *Barina's* boudoir door with her finger-nail. The servant becomes a member of the family in due course. The czardom of the old family servant is accepted by the *khazyaeeka* of a noble family, and their guests have been known to sit at table in their *datcha* patiently waiting for the dinner that was not forthcoming owing to the cook's vodka habit. No severe censure would be passed on the latter. The hem of the *Matushka's* * frock would be kissed later on and all forgiven. The peasant retainer will also kiss your feet; but, on the other hand, he will call you by your Christian name quite gaily at a picnic or on some other exhilarating occasion.

* Dear little mother.

The scarcity of towns is a peculiarity of the Empire. A country town may contain only a few hundred inhabitants, whereas a village population may run into thousands. The smaller towns are often innocent either of street-paving or a system of drainage. The shops are frequently dark little holes. Only recently has the merchant learnt the art of putting his goods in the shop window. On the other hand, the gentle art of pictorial advertisement may be said to have originated in the various shop-signs that hang outside the shops to give the passer-by an idea of what is sold within. These are gradually disappearing from Petrograd; but in the small towns, where the customer is still in all probability illiterate, they remain well in evidence. Some are effective. They remind one of the old inn signboards as specimens of local art.

The town may possess a railway station, and if so, this being a State erection, will be sufficiently imposing. But a station may be as many as ten miles from the town the name of which it bears. The Russian Imperial railways decline to meander in order to suit the convenience of wayside towns.

The houses are either not numbered, or numbered promiscuously. Neither do they have fancy names like "Snowlands" or "Llan-something." A house is known by its owner's name. "Smith's house" houses Smith; but if Smith's name sticks it may house Robinson when it passes from Smith's possession; so the place is not so simple nor so definite as it sounds.

In the large towns houses are built in blocks with a courtyard. Twenty families may inhabit one block, and the *dvornik*—the watchman and tale-carrier to the police—has enough to do looking after them all. There is no lack of colour. Each house may be painted a different colour, and the roof a different hue again—a chocolate house with a red roof, or a green roof over a pink house. The churches have their gilded and coloured cupolas. A very wide main street will make the houses seem of a lesser height than they are. The bank is always an imposing building. The hotel in a minor country town is likely not up to date. Even such obvious accessories as egg-cups may be lacking. Russians have a way of sucking a raw egg which makes the egg-cup less essential. The larger hotels will sometimes offer the visitor the regulation musical entertainment during his repast. I have stayed at an hotel where the music was provided by an enormous orchestrome.

In the hotels of the country towns can be seen the class of Russian least studied by the outsiders —the small tradesman. He is to be found here with his family in the parlour drinking tea, and he and his wife smoking cigarettes. Cigars in Russia are expensive and usually bad.

Towns straggle, like the villages, with waste spaces of land between the masses of houses. Log huts form the dwellings off the main street. Electric light and electric cars arrive in front of what one would consider more vital necessities of civi-

lisation. In the neighbourhood of Novgorod, which is not yet lighted with gas, there is an estate containing a wood-sawing industry. The buildings are lighted with electricity, even the pig-stys.

The Russians have no equivalent for our month at the seaside. Well-to-do Petrograd and Moscow folk possess villas in the country to which they migrate during the summer months. These *datchas*, as they are called, are built of wood, and are generally only one storey high. The rooms are lofty—a lean-to bedroom would not be tolerated in Russia, where they have a great belief in air-space, if not in fresh air. The furniture is quite simple. Some of my pleasantest recollections are associated with holidays I have had staying in *datchas*.

The family lives entirely at its ease. The men often wear grey blouses, like peasants, and the ladies are equally unstudied in their toilets. For friends to turn up without notice and take pot-luck for several days is quite the usual thing. Russians are so genuinely hospitable that they do not invite you to the *datcha*; you just go whenever you fancy, and they are delighted to see you—accommodation will be found for you somehow. The semi-formal week-end visits that we sometimes endure in England are unknown in Russia. A *datcha* is a true Liberty Hall. The visitor stays as long as he likes, and he never appears to outstay his welcome.

The wealthy Petrograd folk hire the *datchas* on the islands of the Neva. These are perfectly delightful, and very expensive.

The Crimea is the holiday land of the wealthy Russian. The Imperial Family usually spend many months of the year there. The nobility and some Grand Dukes have villas round about. The Tartars call the Peninsula the "Little Paradise." The scenery is the finest in Russia. I have had some very jolly times at Yalta, the most exquisitely charming of watering-places. The hill-sides are dotted with Tartar villages and luxurious European hotels, fabulously dear, but the last word in catering and convenience. The marble villas of the millionaires are on the shores of a sea that resembles a vast lake.

Yalta is the Nice of the Russian Riviera. It is prodigiously fashionable. Uniforms are seen everywhere. All the visitors are Russian, though a wandering vagabond of a writer may drop in for a few days. The life retains the Russian free-and-easiness in spite of the fashion. The ladies don amazing costumes in the morning, and remain in them all day. They never change into evening dress. Twenty thousand visitors is the annual number in a normal season.

An enterprising company is engaged in making a health resort at Gourzof. Seven magnificent hotels have been built, called the First, Second, Third, and so on. The cost of living is 35s. a day at the lowest. The hotels stand in gorgeous grounds, and in the evenings they are illuminated with electric light. A doctor, a post office, and a church are maintained for the special use of visitors.

Aloushta is a quaint little town near Yalta with nothing of the luxury or display of the other. People of moderate means stay there, and the climate is even superior. It has more sunshine and less fog. The mountains do not hem it in as closely as they do Yalta. There is a "grape-cure" which adds to its popularity. The grapes grown here are of so nutritive a kind that the Tartars manage to live on them entirely during the gathering season. The "cure" takes five weeks, and the middle of August is the time for beginning. I have never taken a "cure," but I recall how cheap the grapes were, and some of my friends have accused me of consuming as much as five pounds' weight of them in the course of a day.

Another of the "cures" to be had in the Russian Riviera is the "mud cure." Balaclava provides this attraction. The mud is said to possess medicinal qualities. The first piece of railway in Russia was laid down here by the English in the days when Balaclava was "Little England."

The Russian middle-class family goes out in a body to the tea-gardens and drinks numberless glasses of tea. If it is a Petrograd family, the materfamilias (sorrowfully be it said) will resemble the German frau. The cut of her clothes will be that way. The husband will be far more personable. The zoological gardens outside Petrograd is the place for drinking tea and promenading and listening to the band. The animals are quite by the way. At the open-air theatre the performance is "Western,"

and has the trail of the German over it. It goes on well into the night.

Russians love horse-racing. The season lasts from April to August, and there are from fifteen to twenty thousand spectators daily. Over four thousand horses are usually in training at the Moscow Imperial Trotting Club. There are twenty-six horses to every hundred men in Russia, as we are constantly reminded by statisticians. About a thousand race-horses run at Petrograd and Moscow. The racer springs from a breed that was raised by the famous Count Orlov, who crossed the English thoroughbred with the Russian. The horses do not start abreast. There is a system of handicapping by weight and distance. A horse that has a superior speed has to carry an extra weight and start a few yards farther back. A popular form of race is one in which the horses are driven from twenty-five to fifty miles, the last mile or two being taken at their full speed. The winner is the animal which shows itself to be in the best condition at the finish.

Also the Russians are devoted to card-playing. Cards are played all night long in the private houses and at clubs. The police would never dream of interfering. The *salons* of some of the fashionable actresses are great gambling centres. There is a tax on playing cards which goes to the support of the public charities. Their manufacture is one of Russia's chief industries.

Each class possesses its club. The Russian nature is intensely sociable. The high nobility have theirs,

the lesser *chinovniki* theirs; the great merchants, the little merchants, and the working-classes theirs. The clubs are most domestic institutions. Children's balls are one of the features of their entertainments. Dancing is freely indulged in. All the clubs have their ball-room as well as their concert-hall, or combine the two. The Czar has presented the Moscow workmen with a magnificent palace, which was teetotal long before the war.

CHAPTER XVII

EDUCATION

It was about sixty years ago, after the Crimean War, that Russia seriously asked itself what was it that gave other countries an advantage? The answer was summed-up in one word—education. But what was the best evidence of education? Universities! Then let Russia be well provided with Universities.

So Russia provided nine Universities, at Moscow, Petrograd, Kiev, Kharkov, Dorpat, Warsaw, Kazan, Odessa and Tomsk, under the general control of a University Council. There is a Minister of Public Instruction; but he is rarely chosen because of his scholastic ability, and in this respect his appointment is not much different from that of Minister of Education in England. In Russia, the Minister is usually a soldier, and there is a general belief that he spends most of his time in sending visitors to mingle with the students, to take note of the political inclinations of those young gentlemen and ladies. Such places as our Oxford and Cambridge do not exist. The Government decrees a University, and it comes into being; it also pays expenses, superintends examinations and takes a very particular interest in the individual student, paying visits to his home at inopportune moments.

Critics of Russia, and especially German critics, constantly allude to the 98 per cent. of illiterates amongst the people, and compare the small proportion of the national budget expended on education with the amount annually spent, say, on the police. But it has to be recognised that within recent years a system of universal education is sorting itself out of an unwieldy scheme, merely existing on paper. The State is slowly, cumbrously establishing national education throughout the Empire. Although in 1912 a measure for compulsory education came into force, it is so complicated, and departments so overlap, that up to the present there is little evidence of progress except confusion. Many of the State schools are under the control of different departments. The machinery is worked by the Holy Synod, the Zemstvos, and the municipalities, but the Ministers for War, Finance and Agriculture also have schools under their control. There is a dearth of teachers due to the small salary paid. There is objection to schools being controlled by the Holy Synod, for there is a suspicion amongst the *Intelligentzia* that they are used to inculcate anti-liberal doctrines into little minds.

Sixty per cent. of the teachers in the State schools are women, many of them highly educated, most of them with advanced political views, and they in their turn are frequently suspected of inculcating dangerous ideas. To the foreigner, taking as he believes an enlarged view of the virtues of education, it is deplorable to find that nearly every movement

depends on politics—whereas the child should travel a long way before he ought to be bothered with politics. A few years ago, England was in a pother whether religious instruction in our schools should be dogmatic, undenominational or omitted altogether. When we recall the bitterness of that controversy, we can understand something of the intensity of feeling which prevails in Russia on "enlightenment." The Zemstvos, usually the most clear-headed authorities, have done a good deal to purge elementary education of political nonsense, and to attend to the immediate business in hand. The village schools established by the Zemstvos are undoubtedly on the right lines, though I have come across people who are afraid they are "going ahead" somewhat too rapidly.

Co-education—boys and girls studying together—is usual and works well. No prizes are given, and there is no corporal punishment. The town schools give a six years' course, and pupils go from them to the technical schools, and in particular cases to the Universities. Every University is crowded. The students are often very poor. They are all enthusiastic and ambitious. A University education is necessary for most Government posts. It is the desire of most young Russians to get a Government post, and to wear a uniform. But multitudinous though Government posts are, there are not enough to go round. Hundreds of thousands of young fellows are excluded, and it is amongst this disappointed class that you generally find the

most ardent champions for drastic changes in methods of administration. The Jews are under disabilities; they are usually obliged to reside in particular areas. When you find many of them in the prohibited areas as lawyers and doctors, it is because they have gained the privilege by taking their degrees at a University.

Russians are always ready to look at something new. If there is anything novel in education it is sure to have a vogue. There are private schools to develop initiative, avoid routine, and make all study spontaneous. Madame Jarintzoff tells an amusing story of an experiment in Moscow, where a school was started called "The Home of the Free Child." Here the pupils attended for just as much of a lesson as they fancied. They wandered from class-room to class-room while the patient teachers wooed their fickle fancy with fresh subjects, addressing a shifting audience. Another section of schools of the reformed order is the "Free Gymnasia." These have to be nominally under the control of the head of the Educational Department. They are secondary schools, and the inspector keeps a sharp eye on the list of subjects taught. This type of school dispenses with the opening prayer and teaches biology.

Above the elementary schools—comparatively few and far between—are the gymnasia, rather like grammar schools and under Government control. They give a higher education. From the tasks set some of my young friends, I know the examinations are terribly stiff—many boys and girls break down in

PEASANT GIRLS

health under the severity of the work—but these are deliberately hard in order to weed out the inferior student, who, if he fails two years running, is obliged to leave the gymnasium.

The girls of the upper classes are educated either at "institutes"—that is, boarding schools—or in gymnasia. The former are for one class only, generally the nobility, but the latter are democratic enough to admit all classes. The institute turns out the society butterfly; the gymnasium the woman whose culture surprises her western sisters. There are institutes for the daughters of officers killed in war. The Empress Marie, a lady of a century back, established a number of institutes for girls, as well as day-schools. The institute girl is supposed to be recognisable by her graceful carriage and studied deportment. The woman who has merely been to school will lack these acquired graces.

The State educates and brings up a number of its children. Boys destined for the army are taken at the age of ten years into the military schools. The Imperial care is also extended to the children who are to be trained as dancers for the Imperial Ballet. These are also housed and clothed. The sons of the clergy, till recently, destined as a matter of course for the Church, are also educated free of charge.

A large number of well-to-do families educate their children by means of tutors and governesses. Sometimes two or three of each are retained. There is the resident English governess, from whom the boys, as well as the girls, gain their fluency in our

language, and many of the Russians astonish the English visitor by their accurate and fluent English, acquired entirely from the English governess. More than once—indeed, often—I have met Russians who spoke English so correctly that I could not help believing they must have spent many years in England, whereas, in fact, they have never even visited the country. In well-to-do families it is usual to have an English nurse, then English and French governesses, and in the case of young ladies to have an English companion. Many a Russian will tell you that he spoke English before he learnt his native tongue. English governesses get well paid in comparison with what they earn at home. Sometimes it is their lot to live with charming families. Sometimes they are not so fortunate. My sympathy has often gone out to these women, some of them no longer young, living on estates many miles from big towns, with no one except the pupils to speak English to, very lonely, often homesick, sad to the heart. Some never settle down. Others like Russia, and in the capital there are a number who remain from choice, teach Russian, and become Russian, in some cases even joining the Orthodox Church.

I used to think the American child was the most impudent and exasperating self-conscious little animal till I became acquainted with the Russian child. Madame Jarintzoff is right when she says the peasants' children are ever eager to learn, and they are for the most part very intelligent. Modern

peasantry is longing to be taught; "mind and wisdom," they call it. But the offspring of suburbans (one of the nine orders of the Russian people) are such a rough and vulgar, often cruel set of youngsters, that they can in no way be compared with the average children of an English elementary school. The boys and girls of the educated classes are spoiled—the boys and girls under twelve or fourteen. They are gifted, clever; but in the majority of cases lazy, self-willed, quarrelsome, noisy, off-hand, and disorderly. If any children at all are to be smacked, such spoiled Russian ones should be selected for that purpose first.

The parents themselves are to blame for the cheeky manners of Master Russian. They coddle and cozen him, consider his rudeness a sign of spirit, and his impertinence as proof of cleverness. It is rare that any reproof is administered, and as for giving a mischievous lad a thrashing, the thing is unheard of. Corporal punishment at schools, as I have mentioned, is prohibited. Fearing no consequences, the Russian lads lead their masters a fine dance. They will guy an English master's bad Russian to his face and shriek with laughter. Sometimes they refuse to obey instructions. I have been told that sometimes a whole class will insist on smoking cigarettes. It is the boys who decide what shall be done, not the masters. The worst punishment that can befall an obstreperous youngster is to be suspended from attending school—and this is just what the lad enjoys.

Games in the English sense are almost unknown —though here and there is a football club—and quite young people, instead of devoting their spare time to cricket or paper-chasing, or tennis, are prone —I use that word because I know there must be exceptions, and I desire to avoid a sweeping allegation—to be prurient-minded and to discuss sex relationship quite freely. Being a man of the world I am not squeamish; but it does make one shiver when a father, with much gusto, narrates how his lad, aged fifteen, has taken to frequenting houses of ill-fame. A friend, long resident in Russia, told me he knew of a lady who provided her nephew with money so he might have a holiday with a *cocotte* as a reward for having passed his school examinations. These things are regarded differently in Russia from the way they are in England. But it would be one of the finest things for the youth of Russia if English public school games could be introduced and made popular.

The Russian Universities are seats of learning and of political disturbance. When these disturbances occur the Government closes the University, and the recalcitrant student cannot take his degree until he promises to behave himself. As it is impossible to enter the professions without a diploma, the student is reduced to penury by this hiatus in his collegiate career. In 1887 the Universities were placed under police supervision. The *studentchestvo* has always been foremost in the "fight for freedom." A reaction has set in since

the great revolutionary climax in 1911, when hundreds of students were transported. At Moscow, the scene of the most violent efforts on the part of the student to gain autonomy, a body of professors resigned as a protest. A new type of student also entered, while those who remained were men who did not feel inclined to give up their career for the sake of politics. So the student of to-day is a comparatively mild person. At Petrograd the examinations have been made easier so as to attract certain placable minds not hitherto up to the standard—or so say the old *studentchestvo*. The student has now an enemy in his midst in the academist who belongs to the "True Russian People's Union." He is supplied with a revolver by the police, to use, if necessary, against his fellows. This was actually done at the Odessa University in 1912 at a prohibited meeting, and a student named Tglitzki died from wounds received.

The college at Dorpat formerly educated all the doctors in Russia. The Medical Academy at Petrograd was always more or less of a military institution. It trained the army doctors, but civilians were admitted as well. In 1913, an Imperial ukase turned it into an exclusively Military College. The students were given the rank of privates and volunteers. The course of study was abbreviated, and a sabre added to the student's uniform. There was a huge revolt. The Academy was promptly closed. Then the women medical students came to the rescue of their "comrades." They threw open their

own lectures at the Women's Medical Academy to the recalcitrant medicos; but this was not permitted.

The revolutionary character of the student has been put down to the lack of restraint in his school-days. The police officer is his first real schoolmaster. A sentence of five years' exile is passed on a lad who would have regarded a thrashing, such as our public school boys get, as an unsurvivable outrage to his dignity. There is no one to shepherd the student or influence his ideas. The lecturers deliver their lectures, and their duty is done. There are no sports. The student is left alone with his dream of regenerating Russia single-handed. There are no resident students. Board and lodging have to be found in the town. It is reckoned that about 80 per cent. of the 11,000 students at the Moscow University are abjectly poor. During the vacation they follow any calling that comes handy for a living. The fees are very small, and the Universities themselves are poorly endowed.

As the Universities are under complete Government authority there has arisen an interesting educational venture in Moscow. This is the Shaniavsky University. It is a private institution endowed by a private individual. The Educational Society of Moscow maintains it. Here the best professors give courses of lectures to which persons of every class of society flock. The University has not the power to confer diplomas, which, as I have pointed out, are indispensable in Russia if anyone wishes to

enter a Government profession. So many of its students remain at the Moscow University for this purpose, but pursue serious knowledge at the free-lance seat of learning. Army officers are among its students, and a large number of leisured women, as well as the peasant "intellectual." The highest fee is £1 a year, but for workmen there is a specially reduced fee of 3s. per annum. Anyone over 16 years of age may become a member.

The famous Smolensky School, started many years ago outside Petrograd to teach the workmen many things that they ought to know, was closed by the Government a year or two back. It was immensely popular, but the evening classes were carried on with all the reserve of a mystic sect. Members were invited privately by the teachers, who visited the factories for the purpose. The rapidity with which these adult peasants learned to read is said to have been amazing. The Government marked signs of political activity, and the Smolensky School was closed down.

The steady flow of progressive ideas hardly gives time to mark epochs in the education of Russian women, but one date—1861—stands out clearly. A woman then asked to be allowed to take a course of medicine, and was admitted. "Let us study law," "Let us study mathematics," and they flocked in ever-increasing numbers, only to have the door closed altogether by a timid University Board. "Well, we can go elsewhere!" And they flocked to Zurich, to Berlin, until they had convinced men

that feminine education was a valuable asset, and regular University courses were organised. The Women's School of Medicine, with 1,000 beds, was arranged at the Nicholas Military Hospital, and male professors lectured. After the Bulgarian War sixty students became doctors, and many of them were decorated for work among the wounded.

There is no prejudice against "inky ladies." One, Princess Dashkoff, was President of the Academy of Sciences and director of some newspapers; Marie Markovitch was renowned as a novelist dealing with communal life; and Valentine Dmitrieff, in exile at Tver, wrote valuable papers on village conditions and reforms. Marie Tsebrikoff directs the paper *Education and Instruction*, and is a powerful leader in the emancipation of women. No country has produced so great a woman mathematician as Sophia Kovalevsky, who took the Bordin Prize in Paris (1888); and perhaps it may be fair to claim Madame Curie, the discoverer of radium, as a Russian scientist, though she hails from Warsaw. Some of us heard Marie Bashkirtseff speak, and most of us have read her "Letters" and "Diary." A lady of great fame and a very long name is Mlle. Perejoslavsiva, director of the biological station at Sebastopol and helper in scientific surveys.

To-day in Russia, as in most countries, women of all classes become scientists, authors, teachers, and clerks. They are keen on social reform. That

some of them are "Terrorists" has been amply shown in recent history.

Generally speaking, education in Russia is rather in the melting-pot. Intellectually, Russia has as high a standard as England. The trouble is, that some people think an intellectual person is necessarily a dangerous person.

CHAPTER XVIII

A LAND OF MANY RELIGIONS

I DO not desire to over-accentuate the fact that the natural devoutness of the Russian impresses one. There can never fade from my memory a visit I paid to Kiev, the holy city of Russia, and where Christianity was first preached. The monastery is imposing, and there are wonderful catacombs with dark cells, where in far-off days saintly men lived. Here come thousands of pilgrims. I joined them, and, carrying a candle in my hand, moved with the great throng along narrow, gloomy passages, and watched the way in which the shrines were approached and reverently kissed. I put forward no claims for myself—I went there as a spectator—but no man can witness the piety of these worshippers, many drawn from far corners of the Empire, without realising they have a very precious possession.

The Christian religion in Russia was grafted on to Paganism. A Moslem invader then helped to identify it with patriotism by attacking Russia and Christianity simultaneously. To-day, orthodoxy and patriotism are the same thing to the Russian masses. "Holy Russia" means that Russia is religious and that religion is Russian.

The Russian Church is governed by a convention called the Holy Synod, which has at its head a Procurator who represents the Czar, and sees that the supremacy of the State is not interfered with. The Procurator is nicknamed the "Emperor's eye." The Holy Synod is made up of three metropolitans, a number of archbishops and bishops, and a small number of the inferior clergy. It is appointed by the Czar, who can dismiss any member he pleases. The clergy are divided into two classes, the White or secular clergy, and the Black clergy or monks. The White Priests must marry, but the Black Priests must not. These latter are men of better education than the parochial clergy. The village "pop," as he is called, has no chance of being promoted to a bishopric unless he first becomes a monk. This is only possible in the event of the death of his wife. The authorities provide him with a wife before he takes holy orders. The lady is selected from among the daughters of other village "pops."

Formerly the priesthood was a kind of hereditary caste. A priest's son was compelled to become a priest. But latterly this law has been rescinded, and freedom to enter a lay profession is accorded to the "pop's" son. In consequence of this, there is a shortage of clergy in the Russian Church. In 1905, a certain liberty of conscience was granted to Russians. Officials are no longer compelled to receive the sacrament as a guarantee of good faith, and dissenters may build themselves churches if their body consists of more than fifty persons.

The Russian Church stands midway between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Its ritual is more complicated and ornate than that of the Roman Catholic Church. Its fasts are more frequent and rigid. In doctrine there is little difference, but the Russian Orthodox Christian has a bigger quarrel with Rome than he has with the Protestant churches. It is intensely Slavonic. It has remained so in spite of all westernising influences, such as have modified the national ideal in secular matters. That is why the peasant sticks to his church. It represents Holy Russia.

The Government gives recognition to certain other religions. Poland is mainly Catholic. Finland is almost entirely Lutheran. The Lutherans in Russia are a large, well-organised body of about six million members. They are found all over Russia, and their Church is distinct from that of Germany or Sweden. The Lutheran enjoys full freedom. The only thing he may not do is make a convert from the Orthodox Church. There is no missionary spirit in the Russian Church, except from political motives, but woe to the church or sect that perverts a member of the Orthodox Communion.

There exists an immense body of schismatic believers in Russia. They call themselves the "Old Ritualists." They date from the seventeenth century, when certain changes were made in the wording of the liturgy by a reforming patriach. The changes were small: two alleluiahs instead of three, and the

sign of the cross made with three fingers instead of two. But the old believers scented heresy in this interference with the existing thing. They broke themselves off from the body of the Church, which they denounced as "Satan's Synagogue," and set up for themselves. To-day they number some twenty-five millions. The respectable middle-class Russian merchant is nearly always a *Raskolnik*, or "old believer."

The Church's public ceremonies are a kind of social function. The blessing of the waters of the Neva at Petrograd, on January 6th, the Feast of the Epiphany, is one of these ecclesiastical functions. The archimandrite, robed in full canonicals, performs the ceremony in front of the Winter Palace. The Imperial Family is always in attendance. The archbishop recites certain prayers, and then makes a hole in the ice with his crozier. From this hole water is taken and presented to the Sovereign to taste. As the water of the Neva is known to be of the most pestilential kind this part of the ceremony is attended with no little danger to the Czar, who carries it out to the letter.

Blessing the food on Holy Saturday is another religious function that resolves itself into a sort of social revel. All the food eaten on Easter Day has to be blessed by the priest. At Moscow the huge riding-school is transformed into a sort of market, or bazaar, where the various foodstuffs are set out to be blessed. Easter eggs of all imaginable colours, a peculiar cake called *kulich*, and every

conceivable article of diet. Every house in Russia is blessed by the priest, who sprinkles it with holy water. He comes along with his assistants and inaugurates a Russian house-warming. Factories and railway stations are likewise treated in this way.

The religion of the Russian does not permit the use of graven images. But the ikon, a species of picture worked in metal and studded with jewels, is substituted. The ikon gets far more veneration than the graven image seen in the Roman Catholic churches. A Russian salutes the ikon by crossing himself whenever he meets it. It may be in church, in his own house, by the roadside in a shrine, or being carried in a procession. The ikon is everywhere in Russia. The tavern and the workshop each has its ikon. These symbols of religion are carried to the sick, as they are supposed to be possessed of healing properties.

The Russian Church has an immense hold on the people. The village "pop" is a man of poor education, but he serves his purpose in dispensing the sacraments and performing the rites and ceremonies, which mean a good deal more to the Russian Christian than an English mind can bring itself to realise.

The services are immensely long. There are no seats provided for the congregation. Worshippers either stand or kneel. The singing is all done without musical accompaniment, but it is generally agreed to be unequalled for beauty. All the priests have fine bass voices. The churches are thronged at

AN IKON

festival-time. In spite of their dazzling splendour the poorest moudjik is at home in them.

Russia is the land of strange religions. Religious sects of the wildest and most grotesque kind still flourish in certain more remote parts of the country. The *Raskol* (schism) was the parent of these. The Russian always goes to extremes. The old-time *Raskolnik* went to the stake for the sake of the spelling of a sacred word, and suffered imprisonment before he would shave his beard, which act was held to be a disfiguring of man created in God's image. The descendants of these martyrs still exist and regard the State as the Kingdom of Satan, and the Orthodox Church as antichrist. This makes the *bezpopovtsy*, or no-priest sectarian, a dangerous person politically, and somewhat excuses religious persecution in his case.

The Russian freak-religionist believes that the world is about to come to an end. He further believes that the sooner he is out of the world the better, and with appalling logic he preaches a cult of self-destruction. A sect called the *Philippoftsy* regards killing as an act of mercy. Suicide is considered meritorious. These sects were known in their heyday, which is happily passed, as the "Chokers" or "Clubbers." They not only gave the *coup de grâce* to their parents, relations, and friends, together with themselves, but they elected to die by the most unnecessarily horrible methods. A peasant not so very long ago persuaded a number of his fellow-villagers to shut themselves up with him

in a hut which had been prepared for the purpose with a coating of pitch, and there cremated themselves. They left a message attached to a tree near-by explaining the religious nature of their action, and the site of the pyre was venerated as a holy spot by the villagers. Drastic measures had to be taken to check the veneration offered to the ashes of the martyrs. The *Philippoftsy* were also given to starving themselves to death. It is estimated that several thousands of peasants and their families perished in this hideous manner towards the end of the last century. In 1870, a child of seven years old played the part of Isaac to his father's Abraham.

As opposed to the last-named sect come those who believe in an approaching millennium. They go about, either prophesying themselves or else seeking for the prophet in the forests and wilds. Prophets and seers rise up on every hand to supply the want. Strangely enough, Napoleon was held by this sect to be the Messiah. It is said that secret homage is still paid to his image in certain quarters. There was a print representing the "Apotheosis of Napoleon," moving in the clouds among his marshals, that used to be found in the cottages of these people. The legend is that he will return and overthrow the rule of Satan. This millennium dream, it should be added, contains many mundane items in regard to the non-payment of taxes, more land and the amelioration of labour. Russian realism has worked at the millennium on definite material lines.

The "Tramps" or "Runners" are another

Russian sect. These hold the doctrine that salvation lies in isolation. Vagrancy is their ideal of holiness. The *Strannik* forsakes his family and retires to the forest. He rejects marriage. The passport, as a means of establishing his forsworn identity, is repudiated, and a number of other inconvenient things go in the great renunciation. He is at liberty to steal, since the law is Satan's institution and any active protest against it meritorious. The more perfect *Strannik* is always wandering. After his baptism—a weird ceremony performed in the woods at night—he is bound to the life of a pilgrim. Less strict members discreetly put off baptism, with which begins the tramping obligation, until death approaches. They then are removed to a neighbour's house so as to fulfil the conditions of dying away from home and kindred. In the old days the Tramp sect was largely recruited from the ranks of runaway serfs and escaped convicts. A religious prejudice in Russia generally has a political justification. A "conscientious objector" to a passport is a truly Russian convention. When told to produce his passport, he displays an irritating document with words to this effect: "They who persecute thee are preparing for themselves a place in Hell." He also has secret signs and tokens by which he communicates with his fellow adepts. The Tramp sect is by no means extinct in Russia to-day.

Even less savoury are the so-called mystical sects. These do not date from the rupture with the Established Church in the seventeenth century, but are

a kind of agnostic "variation" of the Christian religion. Whereas the "no-priest" fanatical bodies reject all outward forms of orthodoxy, the mystical sects, to all overt appearance, conform to the worship of the Church. Their peculiar practices are carried on in private. The two leading mystical sects are the *Khlysty* and the *Skoptsy*. The *Khlysty*, or "Flagellants," call themselves the "People of God." The other is a nickname given them by the Russians, who rejoice in finding nicknames for everyone. No one knows where their heresy originated. They have a sacred tradition and a dogma which forbids them writing it down. They worship a Messiah who was supposed to have appeared in the seventeenth century. They call him "Lord God Sabbaoth." They believe that men may become divine, and their beliefs lead to unspeakable blasphemies. Some of the women have received the title "goddess." Their secret rites exercise a great fascination on the mind of an imaginative people. Hence their success. They received their nickname of "Flagellants" through an imported custom of whipping themselves into a state of ecstasy. They are said to dance like the dervishes. Their meetings take place at night and the women dress in white. Hypnotism and other unwholesome "ways and means" are introduced. A theoretical asceticism serves as a cover for something very different. The *Skakuny*, or "Jumpers," are a branch of this sect. They appeared first at Petrograd, and are one of the Western innovations. The Protestant Finns took

up their practices. The peculiarity of the Jumpers is obvious from their name. Instead of dancing they jump. They hold a sort of ball, and dance in couples. To the outward world they are known for their sobriety.

The *Skoptsy* hate flesh and blood. They practise self-mutilation, make themselves eunuchs, and call themselves the "White Doves." By worldly profession they are usually money-changers. Bankers are glad to get them as clerks or cashiers, for their worldly ambitions are restricted. Yet the members of the *Skoptsy* are famous for accumulating large fortunes. Some of them are millionaires. Their fortunes go to the propagation of the sect, for they leave no heirs. The "Mutes" (*Moltchalniki*) have a recent origin in Bessarabia. They take a vow of silence, and stick to it with the tenacity of the freak-religionist. A similar sect is the "Non-Pray-ers," who, preserving the doctrine that the Deity can only be worshipped in spirit in truly Russian fashion, reject not only ikons and candles and such-like accessories, but all forms of spoken prayer.

But whether he be Orthodox or wayward, the Russian is always religious.

CHAPTER XIX

INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC

RUSSIAN literature is essentially democratic. The story is often used as the cloak to cover the political reformer's creed. Most of Russia's great writers have been of peasant origin. Tchekoff was the son of a serf, and Gorki of a working man. The Russian looks to the novelist for a message. Most of the characters in Russian novels represent quite common people. Humdrum life is depicted as a protest against the restrictions that produce it. Life is presented without comment, as in the plays. The genius of Gogol made these realistic stories classics. Dostoyevsky also rejoices in realism, but he always finds the divine spark and delights in digging the good out of the most hopeless soil.

The Russian reader is no snob. There is no class existing in Russia that could be gratified by meeting with titled heroes and heroines. No Russian *Family Herald* exists. So the Russians adore Dickens. M. Vedensky, who translated his works, endeavoured to persuade Dickens to go out and settle in Russia. Gogol, the Russian humorist, sacrificed his art in order to become a teacher. Tolstoi deliberately put the philosopher and reformer before the artist, and stuck to it.

The heroes and heroines of the Russian novel of to-day are generally students with selfless ideals, who go into the country to teach the poor. The village doctor is a favourite hero. He fights epidemics, and hygienic principles are insinuated into the reader's mind. The sombre realists like to tell stories about advanced children who are cribbed, cabined and confined by the narrow ideas of their parents. The fetish of family life is attacked.

Russian authority is not always sure that literature is good for the nation. The Little Russian poet Shevchenko was exiled and forbidden to do any writing. Dostoyevsky was sentenced to death and reprieved only after the rifles containing the fatal volley had been pointed at his breast. Strangely enough, that episode changed the victim's view on life to a less hopeless and bitter one. He became the upholder of the religious belief of the peasant and was always loyal to the Church. Even Pushkin got into trouble. It should be borne in mind, however, that much that is called literature in Russia is propaganda—all novels must have a purpose—and that therefore a good deal of the writing is intended to create discontent amongst the people.

The fable is a favourite form for Russian satire to take. The Russians have a fable-writer as famous as Æsop—Krylov. This genius showed up the weaknesses of his age in his fables. They were written in rhyme, and have been translated into twenty different languages. They are full of scathing satire.

The purely symbolic and mystic writers have a large following in Russia. The allegorical style is suited to the Slav mind, and, needless to say, the Russians love fairy tales. The peasantry engage the services of professional tellers of fairy tales who come and sit on their hearths and recount these stories. The traditional fairy tale was thus faithfully handed down by word of mouth. As with the folk-songs and epics, an attempt has been made to collect the fairy tales of the Great and Little Russians, and of other Russians, in book form. Mr. Post Wheeler has given an English version of these. As he observes, the Russian fairy tale is, more strictly speaking, a wonder tale. The fairy element does not predominate. The myths of the most ancient of the Slav people are preserved in these tales, which contain in a most remarkable way all the characteristics of the Russian of to-day.

In philosophy the Russian holds a prominent place. He thinks clearly. Yet whilst he is a mystic, he insists on realism in modern fiction, and though he is an idealist he is acutely concerned with modern economic problems. In religion—apart from the freak sects described in the previous chapter—he is a conservative, but there is no man or woman who is so "advanced"—indeed there is an "advanced" thought, followed by practice, which would cause folks of other lands, who consider themselves enlightened, to hoist their eyebrows. The Briton marvels at the daring nature of the topics selected for conservation. The Russian asks his gods how

an intelligent being can talk about the weather. The Russian is perplexed that the man who places a golliwog in front of his motor car, and wears a bog-wood pig on his watch-chain should call Russia the land of superstitions. The English man or woman watches with some superiority a Russian cross himself sixty times in succession, and promptly takes precaution by touching wood.

The Russian newspaper is of necessity a discreet publication. The existence of the censor excludes the possibility of articles criticising passing events. "Articles of an instructive nature take the place of comments on the passing day," says a writer with some sarcasm. Politics and social questions are dealt with in the *feuilleton*, which, under the cover of fiction, conveys the message of the social reformer or political malcontent. The censor will allow you to say a good deal in a *feuilleton*. Newspapers are less ephemeral than in England. A "Football Edition" to be read and thrown away would not be understood. In some cases the editor who has published something displeasing to the authorities is fined; in others he is punished by not being allowed to print advertisements—an ingenious method of suppressing a captious publication.

The saying "Art for Art's sake" has been changed by the Russian patriot to "Art for Russia's sake." It is well known that the emancipation of the serf was brought about through the instrumentality of Turgenev's "Notebook of a Sportsman." In the same way it was a famous picture painted by a

patriotic Russian artist depicting the horrors of the convicts' tramp to Siberia that caused the then Czar to change the method of conveyance. The convicts now travel by barge or by rail. In the pictures of national life we see this same spirit behind the painter's art. "I must know my Russia," he seems to say; "I must understand my native land!" Thus the Art Gallery at Moscow contains the whole case for the peasant on canvas. The pictures are all painted with the realism that enters into all Russian art. Apart from the desire to reform or alleviate, the Russian painter may be suspected of a love of the "gruesome" for its own sake. The canvas showing the murder of his son by Ivan the Terrible is blood-curdling.

The ikon is, of course, the earliest example of Russian painting. Here the idea was, obviously, "Art for Heaven's sake," and art, with Russian perversity, went under even while it was serving as religion's handmaid, for it has been asserted that Byzantine art was made ugly of deliberate purpose to counteract the worship of beauty that obtained in Greece. The early Orthodox Church certainly gave out a legend that the Saviour Himself possessed no personal beauty, but was deformed. The ikon came from Constantinople. It came in its accepted form, if not actually from a deliberate intention to degrade art, yet from an inartistic attempt to effect a compromise with the Second Commandment. The Orthodox Church regards an image as idolatrous, being a graven image. The holy ikon is a flat

painting on metal, overlaid with jewels on all but the face and hands, so that the effect is of a bas-relief. Every vestige of art entering into its production is guarded against by the fact that the faces of the saints portrayed always have to conform to a conventional type. Still it has been noticed that Russia possesses to-day an ecclesiastical painter, Victor Vasnetzov, who has executed the magnificent mural paintings at the cathedral at Kiev. His pictures of Christ and the Blessed Virgin are being copied by the ikon painter. This artist retains the vivid Byzantine colouring and much of the tradition. He is doing great things for Russian church art, the most conservative art in the world.

The Russians are inveterate playgoers. The plays are realistic. Someone has said that both in France and Russia life and the stage agree. "In France people are theatrical in real life, in Russia they think sincerely and say what they think." The people on the Russian stage say what the Russian in real life thinks and says. The plot of the play is always simple—trivial, or even non-existent. The Granville-Barker productions among us come nearest to the Russian type. One is held by the intense truth and reality of what is being depicted. Disillusionment is a favourite theme with Russian playwrights. The Russian does not go to the play in order to forget the actualities of life as the Briton boasts of doing. He likes Mr. Arnold Bennett's "Honeymoon," which has been produced in Warsaw, and Mr. Bernard Shaw's "John Bull's Other Island."

There is no record, so far as I know, of "Charley's Aunt" reaching the Russians. A Jewish playwright, Yushievitch, has given the stage a picture of low Jewish life in which a mother compels her daughters to support the family at the cost of their virtue. The daughters accept the situation as inevitable, and so does the audience. The wrongdoer is always condoned by Russian largeness of heart. The censor takes no cognisance of the morals of a play. He is only concerned in the politics, which latter include the attitude of the author towards orthodoxy.

People's theatres are a feature of Russian social life. The masses are admirably catered for in this respect. Outside Moscow, for instance, at "The Hermitage," there is a summer theatre mainly for the people's use. The Narodny Dom, or People's Palace, and intended for the poorest classes, has a theatre attached. I went to an opera one night and got an excellent seat for a trifling sum. The greatest singers in the world can be heard here. A man can take his wife and three children for 2s.

The performances at the Artistic Theatre in Moscow are world-famous for their excellence. "The Blue Bird" was first produced here. Ibsen's plays are frequently given. It is worth visiting Russia to see one of these performances.

Grand opera can be heard in Petrograd at the Imperial Theatre, or the people's open-air theatre in the tea-gardens. Tchaikovsky is the favourite composer in both places. The Russian common people have a sound musical judgment. The upper

classes at Petrograd continue to prefer foreign opera. The figures have been worked out at a hundred and thirty-three foreign opera performances against thirty-three native productions. At the popular theatres, native talent gets a better chance, which looks as though the revival were on a sound basis of genuine appreciation, and not of fashionable faddism. The expenses of the opera at Moscow are said to exceed the takings by between one and two million roubles annually. The deficit is made up by the State. Moscow owes much to Rubenstein for its musical education. Being the Muscovite centre it does not run after strange musical gods like cosmopolitan Petrograd. The Imperial Opera House claims to be, after the Scala, the largest in the world. Every person employed is a Government employee, and receives a Government pension. Many bass voices are brought thither from the ecclesiastical seminaries.

The most national musical entertainment in Russia is that given by the gypsies—troupes of male and female singers whose services are chartered either privately or in the restaurants. The large restaurants outside Moscow are the places to hear the gypsies. They give their performance in a private room. They scorn accessories. The audience sits at one end, and the performers group themselves at the other. A member of the troupe leads off, and a wild burst of song ensues. Gypsy music is said to intoxicate native listeners. The Westerner has to get accustomed to it. It carries you into another world. It has all the Slav melan-

choly. I was present at such a concert one evening, but I cannot admit I was fascinated.

Concerts are well patronised. Russians are fond of orchestral music. The Russian working classes have no prejudice against classical music like the British. They do not as yet suspect that they are being educated when good music is offered to them —as it is on Sunday evenings at Petrograd when free concerts are given to the people by Count Shermetieff.

More gramophones are imported into Russia than any other country. They are to be found at the small eating-houses in every town, and they blare out from the cottages of the well-to-do Tartars in remote corners of the Empire. They are displacing the native musical instruments, just as the machine is ousting the hand-made article. The coarser performances are those of a type imported from Germany. The national variety entertainment is much freer from offence. The French music-hall song is imperilling the existence of the national folk-song. The modern Russian music-hall song is distinctly *risqué*. The factory hand prefers it to the older songs.

The ballet in Russia is an Imperial institution. Every Russian is a dancer by nature. In the remote villages one may see boys and girls, dancing in exactly the same way as the trained ballet-dancers—the same poses, and pantomime, and the identical skips and leaps that figure on the stage. This spontaneity, no doubt, gives Russian ballet its charm.

But although Nature plays so large a part, no dancer undergoes more arduous training than the Russian. The State sees to this. Ballet dancers are produced in the same way as military officers. Both are educated from childhood at the charges of the State. Children are trained in the Imperial School of Dancing from the age of eight. They appear at the Imperial Ballet in Petrograd or Moscow at the age of sixteen; and at about thirty-six they retire into private life on a pension. To anyone who knows Russia, it is interesting to discover how characteristic of the race the ballet is. In its way it is as characteristic as the Russian literature. In the first place there is no star dancer. *Ensemble* is the effect aimed at. Each member of the corps must be an artist. The art of pantomime, of gesture, of acting, must be fully understood by each dancer. The ballet stands on its merits as a whole. It is the spirit of co-operation in evidence in art as in everything else Russian. The scenery is an important feature.

The male dancer has always existed on the Russian stage. It is typical of Russia's independence of the trammels of convention that she should consummate the art of the dancer in the mixed ballet. Artistically this is a huge improvement on the ballet composed of women only.

CHAPTER XX

THE MAN ON THE LAND

In Russia you are constantly changing your focus if you want to get a true perspective. You have, however, always to keep fixed in mind that 85 per cent. of the population of Russia is directly associated with and dependent on the land. So even when you have been amid the whirl of Moscow manufactories, have settled the affairs of nations in Petrograd dining-rooms, idled at Yalta in the Crimea, and found that Russian society folk are charming, you really know very little of Russia.

The real Russia, huge and inarticulate, lies away from the towns. You have to get into the wheat region of Bessarabia in the south, into the forest lands of the north, to travel into the regions beyond the Volga to understand. In the Russian railway trains you jog along for many hours, through sad woodlands, with the same type of trees, without feature or variety, apparently stretching thousands of miles, rather like an endless stretch of stage scenery, twirling round and round, the very monotony blurring the fact it is an interminability of the same landscape.

Occasionally there is a break in the woods, and a ragged semi-cultivated patch is revealed. Now and

then a glimpse is got of a bulb-domed church over a sprawling village. But the impression you obtain from the windows of a leisurely railway train is that of a poorly-inhabited land, scarcely touched by cultivation. Yet it is on those wastes that Russia's millions live, work, rear families. They are far from railroads, most of them are illiterate; they have little interest in the outer world. But they are the rock on which Russia rests.

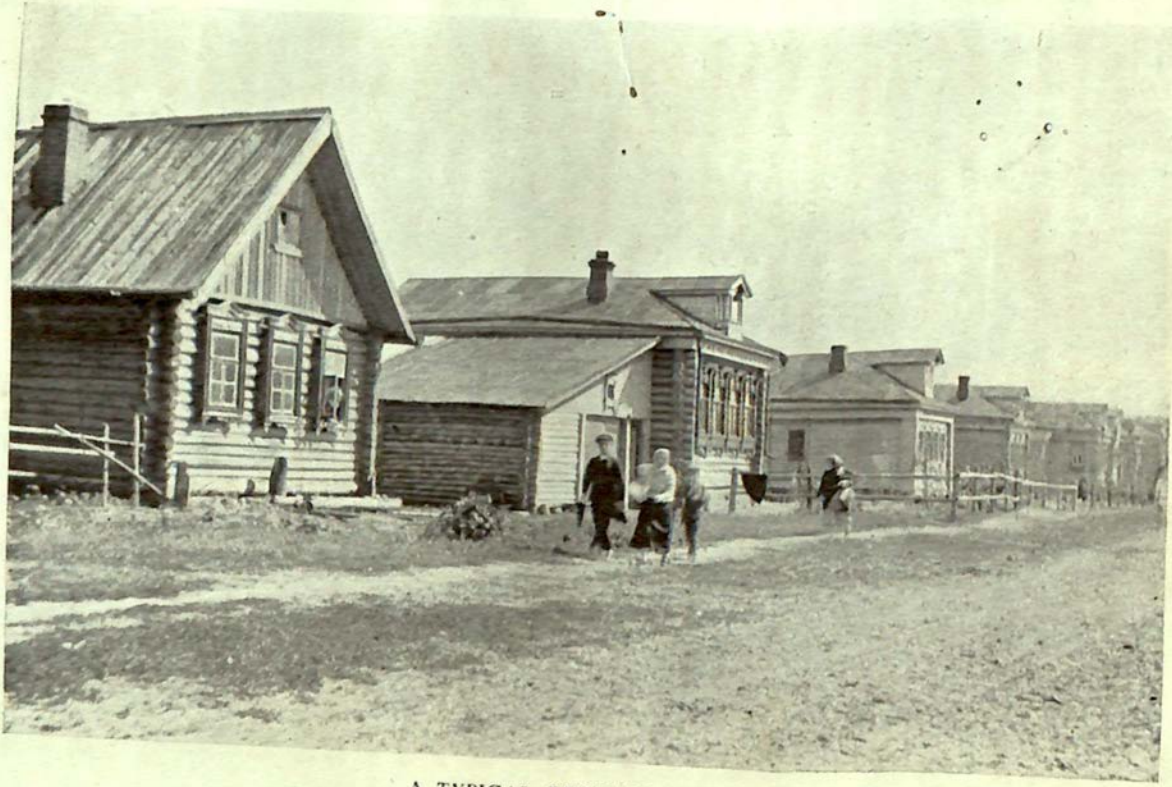
In odd corners of Russia I have taken pot-luck with the moudjik, sat at his rough table, and with wooden spoon had my share of soup out of the common dish, have slept on the floor in a corner when there has been nothing better, and through rainy days have lain in his rough cart whilst trundling over the winding earth tracks on the steppes. I have always found him kindly, patient, devout—and I have a warm place in my heart for him.

In the south there is more vegetation, more sunshine, more brightness in life; but a Russian village in one place is very like a Russian village a thousand miles away. There is one very wide street, grass-grown in places, with the trail made by vehicles wending unevenly down it, and with a double row of single-storied grey-log houses on either side. Sometimes the tin roofs are painted green; sometimes there is rough decoration in the woodwork of the eaves. But usually there is a melancholy forlornness about the whole place. There is no character, no individuality about the villages. They are all alike. Russian towns are only villages on a big scale. There

is always the one big street, and the place is of some importance when its buildings rise to the dignity of double stories. The famous Nevski in Petrograd is a glorified village street.

Nor is there anything attractive about the ordinary village. It shows no pride. There is no pleasant approach to the church. Picturesque though it may appear at a distance, its whitewash is very patchy on close acquaintance; chunks of its outer plaster covering may have fallen away, leaving breaks which from across the way look like war maps. There may be some flowers in the garden of the cottage; but they are not looked after and weeds are neglected, and the general appearance is that of a place which was all right last year, but has been allowed to run to waste since then. There is usually a decrepitude about the fencing, so cattle may wander from a foul backyard into a neighbour's backyard without hindrance. The small farmer agrees the fence ought to be repaired; much damage is caused through want of repairs; but he does not repair it. Interiors vary as much as in other countries. I have been in log cottages spotlessly clean, but I have been in many others.

There is the White Russian, the Great Russian and the Little Russian. Some 5,000,000 White Russians —so called, because of the white broad-belted overcoat worn by the men and women—are in the land by the river Dnieper, and the quietness of the vast marshy country has impregnated the very soul of the peasant. The White Russian is short and



A TYPICAL RUSSIAN VILLAGE

stoutly built; he has fine features and light eyes, but he is rather duller than his neighbours. The Great Russian lives in the Central provinces. The dialect spoken is said to be the purest Slav. He claims to be the stock from which the peoples of the other Russias have sprung. He is proud in being the Slav unmodified by southern blood, the Muscovite, who emancipated Russia from the Tartar yoke. Yet I think he has absorbed some Finnish blood, and this, with the strength that comes from the discipline of the northern clime, has made him a sturdier type, morally and physically, than the Little Russian.

The Ukraine, or Little Russia, is in the south. There are no severe winters, and the region is ideal for agriculture. It is in this area, famous for its black earth, where grows the wheat that is exported to the outer world from Odessa. Compared with the north, a village in Little Russia is a gay place. The villages, however, sprawl more than in Great Russia. The people are more handsome than the Great Russians. Whilst the Finnish strain gives a certain melancholy to the moudjik of Central Russia, the people of the Ukraine have imbibed a Greek and Tartar element. They are gay and sentimental, fond of bright colours, of poetry and music. They delight in love songs. They love picturesque embroidered garments, and have joy in the adornment of their cottages.

Little Russians, however, have the reputation of being indolent. They are leisurely in their movements, and they speak slowly. In will-power the

women are superior to the men. The ladies figure high in the criminal records, having a short way with undesirable husbands. Husband-poisoning was almost a native industry at one time. The married women claim Monday as their own day, and do what they like on it—a kind of early-closing arrangement. The girls choose their own husbands.

The Little Russian is sceptical by nature. The literature of the country is restrained and refined, and the bald realism of the Great Russian is absent. The æsthetic side of the Ukrainian peasants is unimpeachable. They show it in their dress, in art, in their shirking of large unpleasant issues. Their songs are lyrical and romantic, but never epic.

To study the real Russian, you must study the peasant. In matters of detail there are differences between the Great and the Little Russian, but in essentials the moudjik is the same throughout the Empire. I have run across people in Western Europe who believe that when the moudjiks escaped from serfdom sixty years ago, their position was no better improved than to become ill-paid and harshly treated agricultural labourers. The Russian peasant, however, is a landowner. For years he held land on the communal system; but as that plan did not work, recent land legislation has provided a way whereby he can be sole owner. His piece of land may be small, but it is his. He may go into the cities to be a droshki driver, or into a town to work in a woollen or cotton factory, but at periods of the year he drops his urban em-

ployment and returns to his village to attend to his farm.

The love of the Russian peasant for the soil is inalienable. He would die if cooped up in a factory all the year round, and it is the call of the land which takes him away from the towns for several months each year, which accounts for the Russian mill operatives being so stalwart and healthy. The village belongs to the peasant. He goes to the town to earn a little money, to sell the articles that he manufactures on his hearth in the winter months, or he makes a pilgrimage to the town that possesses a miraculous ikon.

The tourist hardly ever comes in contact with real peasant life. There are show villages round about Petrograd and Moscow, where you can see a real *isba* (cottage) with a real stove, and possibly someone sleeping on the top of it; but the genuine peasant who beats his wife on principle, but with no ill-feeling, who prefers the witch-doctor to the *feldscher*, believes in spells and incantations and wood-nymphs, and runs them concurrently with prayers and ikons, is only to be found farther afield.

The universal feature of the peasant, be he of Great or Little Russia, is the preference for communal life. His house never stands alone. There is no fence to divide his land from his neighbour's, or if there is it is usually in disrepair. The peasant builds his own *isba*; it takes him about five or six weeks to do so. It is raised from the generally marshy ground, and the lower floor is used as a

store-place for eatables. The cottage usually consists of one room, about a quarter of the space in which is filled with a large stove and oven. There may or may not be a chimney. There is a prejudice against the latter, as it lets the heat escape. Where this prejudice is respected the family suffer from the effect of the smoke in the eyes—a disease leading to partial blindness is sometimes set up in this way. The stove is built against the wall adjoining the cattle-shed, and so gives the animals the benefit of the heat. In extra cold weather the latter will be invited into the living-room itself. The top of the stove forms a sleeping place for the elderly folk and the babies.

The peasant always has a large family. But more than half the children born—582 out of every 1,000—die before they are five years old. Mortality amongst male children is greater—over 600 out of 1,000—and the principle of the survival of the fittest maybe accounts for the fine physique of the peasant class. Families live together in the patriarchal fashion. The daughter-in-law has to share the *ménage* of her mother-in-law. The family earnings are "pooled." No individual male member would dream of claiming his wages as a personal possession. The women, on the contrary, when they earn a little (it is only a little, true enough) at lace-making or cotton-spinning, are allowed to keep it for their individual use.

Wages do not always take the form of money payment. The harvest is gathered in on the land-

THE WINTER FUEL

owner's estate by workers who take a percentage of the corn or hay as their wage. The commune acts in the same way in dividing up the hay cut on the communal land. Money does not come into the transaction. As an agriculturist, the Russian moudjik has come under much censure. He is charged with using a plough similar to that used by Abraham. He certainly favours a wooden implement. The Zemstvo endeavours to provide him with a more scientific agricultural apparatus; but the moudjik prefers to worry along with his old plough to getting into the hands of the village usurer.

This latter person is a well-to-do peasant, who has bought a piece of land of his own, and who very likely owns a little cotton factory and makes more money that way. He wears his trousers outside his boots like a European, and his wife covers her head in church with a Sunday bonnet. He is known as *Kolak* or "fist," and is unpopular. The moudjik, we are told by his Slavophile friends, has no prejudice against an iron plough as such. He is urged to buy his own land and compete with the "fist" or become one, says the Slavophile, who sees an incipient capitalist in every land-owning peasant. The scientific agriculturist who pits his theoretical knowledge against the practical experience of the tiller of the soil sometimes find himself at a disadvantage.

Directly a factory springs up in the vicinity, a village begins to become civilised. The accordion, which has almost ousted the native guitar, is in turn replaced by a gramophone. European clothes are

worn. The old folk-songs give place to a very offensive kind of music-hall ditty. Another Western fashion that is said to have reached even the remoter villages is the use of the rouge-pot! I travelled once through the Baltic provinces to the agricultural districts, where some of the village girls carry little pots of rouge to work to heighten their natural colouring. No doubt the love of vivid colouring in everything, from the cupola of a church to the inside of a wooden spoon, accounts for this improving on Nature.

The moudjik is a mystic with a strong practical strain. He is humane and large in his sympathies. The peasants are curiously like the Irish in some respects. Their habit of interpolating such phrases as "Glory be to God!" into their speech is remarkable in two absolutely isolated races. Their fairy system is also on similar lines. The Russian peasant can be as winning in "the way he has with him" as the Irishman.

The Russian diminutive as a term of respectful affection is very attractive. Terms of endearment are used with the utmost freedom. A village sexton addressed a lady tourist on one occasion as *galubtchik*, "dear little dove." The Tartar, selling his goods in the bazaar, will call the lady he hopes to extract his price from, "a pearl." In return he is flattered if she addresses him as "prince." The Petrograd cabby will sometimes remind one that he is really a moudjik by an unexpected term of endearment.

The peasant out in the fields is a picturesque object. He wears the native dress in its entirety, a bright-coloured cotton shirt, generally red, print trousers with strips of cloth wound round them puttee fashion, and shoes made of the bark of trees. His shirt is worn outside the trousers, and is gathered in at the waist by a stout belt. He wears either a round felt or fur cap, or a peaked one of the pancake type. In the winter top-boots of felt are worn over the shoes. Top-boots are also donned on holidays. The *tulup*, or sheepskin coat, comes out in the winter. The men and women both wear it, the wool inside and the leather on the outside. It is a sturdy garment. Yet another coat surmounts the *tulup* when the peasant drives his sledge, and a belt encircles the mass of garments at the spot where the waist is faintly indicated, or rather a waist is more or less induced by a terrific tugging and pulling in of the belt.

The moudjik is a fine fellow, with a natural dignity of bearing. He wears his hair long and hanging like a curtain; the nape of the neck is shaved to produce this effect. He parts his hair in the middle. "A Russian murderer," remarks a certain commentator, "looks as gentle as an angel or an apostle." The general result is a benevolent appearance. He possesses an axe with which he is said to be able to do everything—build his house, fell his timber, carve his ornaments, or kill his wife. The moudjik, however, is not a brute. His pity and compassion for suffering is proverbial. Nowhere do beggars flourish

as they do in Russia. The poorest folk share their mite with the palpably unworthy. To him the criminal is an "unfortunate." Prisoners on their way to Siberia receive a constant supply of food and alms from the peasantry. It is not only the holy pilgrim —"God's man"—who benefits by their benevolence. Russian charity is genuine and heart-whole.

The peasant women wear cotton garments, formerly, at any rate, of their own spinning. They go barefoot in the summer, but cover the head out of doors with a kerchief. The married women always cover the head; the girls may substitute ribbon or wreaths of flowers. When a peasant woman goes into town in the summer-time, she carries her boots with her and puts them on when the cobblestone roads make it necessary. The woman is quite as good a field worker as the man. She takes the baby and the cradle with her—the latter is a kind of hammock with a spiral spring by means of which it is suspended from the shafts of the plough. Harvest time is called *stradu*, which means suffering. The whole night as well as the day is often spent in gathering in the harvest. The harvest saint, St. Ilya, always sends a thunderstorm on his day, July 20th, which occurs during the harvesting. The man will go to market with the farm produce, while his wife labours in the fields. She is sometimes yoked with the cow. The moudjik has a proverb, "Beat your wife as you beat your fur, and love her with all your soul!" The peasant girl will do anything rather than remain without a husband to carry out this principle. She

THE FIRST OF THE HARVEST

will relinquish the really good wage that she may be earning at lace-work for matrimony, the plough, the stick, and the love of her husband's soul.

The newly-married sons or daughters come to live under the family roof, so there are often thirty or forty members who have their work at home or abroad planned out by the *bolshak* (head of the family) and have to give him all or part of their earnings. His wife looks after the female section, and it can be imagined she has the harder task in managing the daughters and daughters-in-law. However, the *bolshak* has one privilege which no one envies: he has to pay all the taxes and may be deposed, and his son put in his stead by the authorities. Moreover, he may not sell his house, or go elsewhere without the consent of his family. A husband bringing complaint against his wife has rather a hard lot, for though she is punished for disobedience, *he* is punished for not making himself obeyed.

CHAPTER XXI

POTENTIALITIES

ONE of these days Russia may give birth to a man who can boom it after the manner of an emigration agent for an oversea section of the British Empire. Its plains capable of raising food are enormous. Except for the Ural Mountains separating Siberia from Russia, and the Caucasus range in the south, it would be difficult to find a hill in all the Czar's dominions much higher than a thousand feet. Then there are illimitable forests. Russia has many rivers navigable for thousands of miles. The forest lands are in the north, and the rich black loam lands unsurpassed for wheat are in the south within reach of the Black Sea.

Siberia is another Canada. It has the same climate. It has the same capabilities. Nature has blessed Russia, and the marvel is that its riches, chiefly agricultural, have not been better developed. The simplest explanation is that the Russians have lacked the virility which must accompany the rousing of a continent into fertility. There are over eight and a half million square miles of territory occupied by over 163,000,000 people, 120,000,000 of them of white skin, and, notwithstanding an awful infant mortality, the population is increasing

INTERIOR OF A RUSSIAN COTTAGE

by over a million a year. The average to the square mile is fifteen inhabitants, which is sparse.

The largest landowner is the State, and the property is mostly in the north and chiefly forest. Since the liberation of the peasant in 1861, the plot of ground allotted to each peasant has shrunk from 4·8 desyatins to 2·6 desyatins owing to the increase of population. (A desyatin is about 2½ acres.) Over and above the 131,000,000 desyatins (327,500,000 acres) of land allotted to the peasants and owned by the village communities, Russia has 93,000,000 desyatins (232,500,000 acres) of land which is owned by private individuals. Of this, 73,000,000 desyatins (182,500,000 acres) belong to the nobility. At the present moment half the land owned by individuals, as well as half of that belonging to the State, is let to the peasants. In fact, the entire acreage rented by the peasants amounts to some 40,000,000 desyatins (100,000,000 acres).

Gradually Crown lands are being relinquished, and, under the administration of the Zemstvos, being sold on easy terms to the peasantry. As to how much has recently passed I can secure no statistics, but it is a fair assumption that much has gone over; and I found a strong belief in Russia that all the men who have been soldiering will be rewarded with a gift of Crown land, the accepted amount being four desyatins. If this be so, it will hardly be Crown land in the north which will be given, for it is forest or swamp, and some means will surely be found to shift much of the population to the east of the Urals,

where in Siberia there is plenty of available free land; confined to Russia proper means a large peasant class without land, and for a long while it will be impossible to use the surplus population in industrial pursuits. So the colonisation of Siberia seems to be the readiest means to meet the land hunger which nearly every peasant has in his heart. Besides, the Russian farmer needs much training in agriculture before he gets the same results out of the land that the Canadian farmer succeeds in doing.

But see what is being accomplished. Take the butter industry of Siberia—a new business. Twenty years ago, before the laying down of the Trans-Siberian Railway, the territory did not export a pound of butter. Now the value of the butter exported is twice that of the wheat exported. At Omsk there are over twenty great factories, and I remember when I was there being much impressed with the enterprise of the Danes, who were the first in the field. This butter trade has grown to such an extent that to handle the traffic the railway—in normal times—had to provide 1,080 refrigerator cars, each of which was reckoned to carry fifteen tons each. A weekly service of seven trains was arranged for, and each train had a full complement of some thirty-five cars. These carried their freights to Petrograd, Riga and other Baltic ports, whence steamships carried the butter to England. It was not an infrequent event for a thousand tons of Siberian butter to be delivered in London in a single week. Each

year Siberia sent west nót far short of 100,000,000 lbs. of butter. Omsk, a thriving town, is the centre of two thousand square miles of as fine grazing ground as may be found in any of the new countries.

In his valuable handbook on Russian commercial and industrial conditions, Mr. John H. Snodgrass says Russia's pre-eminence among the nations of the world as the chief possessor of timber resources must remain unquestioned. An almost unthinkable fact is that more than two-thirds of them, at present, remain an unknown quantity. The Russian Empire covers about one-seventh of the earth's surface, and of it some statistics allege at least 89 per cent. is under forests which aggregate a total of 549,800,000 acres, this exclusive of Siberia where the forest areas remain unsurveyed; but a rough estimate has been made which makes an addition to the formidable total above stated of 465,000,000 acres. Such an asset against her future requirements as Russia's forests is something to dream about. The State forests in 1907 supplied 1,286,560,000 cubic feet of lumber, for which the Department of Forestry received into its coffers £6,800,000.

Central Russian forests have been the playground of several generations of lumbermen, so there are signs of exhaustion, Mr. Snodgrass says. In consequence the forests of Northern Russia are drawing attention. More than ever, nowadays, the lumber companies are attracted by the advantages of co-operation for a proper control which shall regulate the trade. The Finns have some time since

established such a means of control. In the Siberian valleys is an area of forest-land which is said to cover 2,000,000 square miles; of this only some 400,000 miles can, for various reasons, be said to be eligible for timbering, but local calculations, allowing forty-five merchantable trees to the acre, would give 11,520,000,000 trees. The time for these trees to mature is placed at 100 years. That would give 115,200,000 trees suitable for the saw, and axe brigade to utilise per annum with scarce a semblance of disafforestation and a well ordered reafforestation system kept properly in working order. The vast navigable system of the Amur—8,630 miles—with its tributaries amounts to between 30,000 and 35,000 miles, and for the most part these waterways are considered to have sufficient floating capacity for the activities of the lumbermen. The lumber wealth of the Amur is just beginning to be tapped. There are already established some few sawmills between Lake Kisi and Khabarovsk, but they are only small concerns. In 1912, the value of the exports of raw and partly manufactured wood from European Russia amounted to about £15,700,000.

Russia produces a high quality leather. It is interesting that until a few years ago the business was in the hands of American manufacturers, but some of these have been ousted by natives taking up the business. Still the Russian business is rather of a peddling kind, and has not yet developed that large scope in operations which can be found in other countries, though in one district some ten thousand

shoemakers turn out about three million pairs of shoes a year. The fact remains that the demand for native leather is greater than the native market can supply, and foreign makers, American and French chiefly, come forward.

I have already referred to Russia's cotton trade, expanding in an enormous way. More than half of Russia's export of cotton goods is sent to Persia, to the displacement of British goods. The possibilities of the cotton trade developing in the Far East are enormous. Then there is the possibility of getting exports out by the rivers which empty themselves into the northern seas—though Russia is the most unfortunate of countries in the very few ports she has which are free from ice all the year round. Her railway system is being enormously enlarged, and whilst advancement is not made with the celerity in some other countries—though in Manchuria some years ago I saw Russian engineers laying down a line at three miles a day—one must appreciate the thousands of miles of line already laid, much of it through the most thinly populated districts. These new ways bring population, and every possible inducement to get families settled in Siberia is made. Every man gets a minimum of 40·5 acres and 200 roubles in cash, which he may repay by easy instalments without interest. Siberia, like Russia generally, is a country of credit trading. So the Government has established all over the country peasant credit associations where everything in the way of tools and machinery can be bought; and

has also started inspectors, hospitals, schools, etc., to mend social conditions. Most settlers migrate into the west, and a sudden boom in gold or oil may cause a budding village to exfoliate into a busy township. In 1903, there was one such village, Obi, with a population of 100 and a very ill-kept single street. It is now Novo-Nikolayevsk, with a thriving butter industry and a population numbering some 65,000.

Great ironworks are prosperous in the Rostov district. Mighty oil-fields are being worked at Baku on the Caspian Sea. In the mountain lands bordering China there are gold mines. There are illimitable possibilities in the matter of cattle, sheep and horse-rearing. Russia's wheat area can be enlarged. In natural products she is able to stand alone. She, however, has a long way to travel before she can claim to be putting her country to fullest advantage.

She is sending much to foreign countries and getting rich. But comparatively the value of her exports is decreasing. Take the relative position, very significant, of the two countries Britain and Germany in one year, 1912. The United Kingdom received from Russia the value of 327,200,000 roubles and sent the value of 139,250,000. So we are buying more from Russia than Russia bought from us. It was the other way about with Germany, for whilst Russia sent her neighbour the value of 453,700,000 roubles, she bought from Germany the value of 519,114,000 roubles.

Russia, however, is striving toward making goods for herself and is going ahead. Between the years 1900 and 1910, the number of additional factories increased their power by about 75 per cent., which means an increase in the production by 150 per cent. This increase in the number of factories has been in connection with the working up of natural products, such as flour-mills, saw-mills, breweries, etc. In the Tomsk and Tobolsk governments, the flour-milling and flour industry forms 60 per cent. and 55 per cent. respectively of the total trade for these governments.

But Russia, whilst seeing to her industrial advancement, will want help from other countries. To get the full benefit of foreign enterprise she will have to slacken some of her restrictive laws against foreigners; she will have to provide that they get quicker justice in the courts; she will have to stop her irritating supervision of every petty alteration in construction and development. Sir Albert Spicer, one of London's chief commercial men, has written: "Whether it be the construction of grain elevators, the installation of municipal services, industrial machinery or bringing English capital into the opening-up of oil lands, some pretext has been found for interposing a Russian bureaucratic commission, with the powers of a punitive court, to find fault with the work, or dispute interpretation of contracts, a practice not set at work until the English firms have sunk serious amounts of capital and technical expenditure . . . and they are now faced with heavy loss, these

facts deciding the majority of English houses to close down and withdraw from the country."

Blessed as she is by Nature, it lies with Russia herself to bring her potentialities into further activity. The aid of the foreigner will count for a great deal; but it must be her own brains and her own sinews which will provide the prosperity that lies before her.

A RUSSIAN FAIR

CHAPTER XXII

WHAT OF THE FUTURE ?

WHAT is going to happen to Russia, not diplomatically, not in a territorial sense, but internally, after the war ? That is a question which outsiders sometimes ask and which Russians are constantly asking themselves.

Russia, like her Allies, smothered her domestic quarrels the day war came. Germany assumed that trouble for the Russian Government meant the opportunity of the Revolutionary party and that rebellion would break loose. But Germany miscalculated the temper of Russia, just as she was completely in error concerning what would happen to the British Empire.

Instead of the war provoking the dissentionists to clamour for changes in administration it brought the whole Revolutionary party into line with the Government. Many of these men had been nurtured on German Socialism of the Karl Marx kind; they had been much under the influence of German literature. But they were Russians first and Socialists second. Besides, without in any way dropping their principles, they knew that the triumph of Prussianism would in no way facilitate the attainment of their ideal. Indeed, there could be no two more dissimilar

men than the cast-iron, inflexible Prussian and the dreamy, poetical Slav. If Russia was to be regenerated, it was not to be through the agency of Teutonic culture. Patriotism, the love of "Holy Russia," was the chief factor, but that Great Britain was Russia's ally was also a great factor.

British political institutions have long been the admiration of enlightened Russians. There are many men who admire them and yet feel they are not at all adapted to the Slav temperament. The masses are not yet sufficiently educated to understand politics; they are too easily led to be given authority in determining the history of the country. I have never met anyone who championed the existing system of government as right in itself. All that has been pleaded is that with its defects, so remote from Western principles, it is the best form of government for a country in a retarded state of development like Russia. And enthusiast though I am for the Western system of government, I know Russia sufficiently well to realise that if she were suddenly furnished with a brand new Constitution, after the British model, she would soon be in the throes of tragedy. The progress of a country should be an evolution of its own characteristics; it should not be dependent on imitating neighbours. It is not my business to be an apologist; but I have long dismissed from my mind the belief that the present method of government is maintained because a powerful circle get enormous and pecuniary advantages. For all I know to the contrary, all the stories

of harsh treatment toward men and women who express liberal views may be perfectly true. But the idea of Russian government is paternal; and so long as the citizen accepts this he never has reason to know the power of the autocracy.

The point is, that when the war came, the people of advanced political thought were as eager as the Grand Duke Nicholas to smite the Germans. So the old propaganda died down. Men in exile wrote championing the cause of Russia. Exiles broke through the prohibition to return to Russia and did actually return, braving imprisonment, but eager to be of service to Russia. They were zealous their country should be victorious. But they have never made any secret that they let their thoughts travel far beyond the ultimate victory over Germany. The old antagonism to the Government having died away, the consequence was that the Government slacked in vigilance, and for a year past there has been a freer public opinion than ever there has been in the annals of Russia.

When one compares the talk of ten years ago with that of to-day one is literally amazed. The Press is more frank than ever it was. Criticism of public men, Ministers—dangerous a few years back—is now as open as in England. Public meetings calling for the dismissal of Ministers have been held. Russia has had duffer Ministers whose incompetence has been proved since the war, and they have been sent about their personal business. They were dismissed because the Czar discovered them to be

incompetent. But there is a mass of conviction, especially amongst the newspaper-reading middle-classes, that the incompetents have been removed under the pressure of public opinion. Therefore for the first time, Russia believes it has found a new weapon of influence, not so drastic as some of the old arguments but as effective, namely the exercise of public opinion which is recognised by the Czar and his advisers. You cannot grip anything tangible, but you cannot escape the consciousness that "public opinion" has come to stay. Folk are to be allowed to say what they think.

A belief prevails that with the close of the war Russia will have a re-birth. She will cast off her sluggishness. She will bestir herself in the science of industry and commerce, and not rely so much for her necessaries upon the foreigner. The war has taught Russia that there is danger in being a commercial colony of Germany, and the temper of the people is "Never again!" I do not think Russia will maintain her present determination, but so long as the determination exists there is industrial and manufacturing progress.

Enormous advance has been made within recent years to ameliorate the condition of the small land-holder, more proportionate advance than in any other land, though the great improvement is not recognised by outsiders. Frankly, no government has done so much in recent times to give the peasantry access to the land. The Duma, though without much power in itself, has enormous power in the ventilation of

A CAPTURED GERMAN GUN

grievances, and here again public opinion shows itself. In London there is a Russia Society, the chief function of which is to provide enlightenment to English people of things as they actually are in Russia, and to scotch popular errors. In Moscow there is an English Society, and its aim is to boom English institutions; so there are not a few men in Russia who believe that under the guise of international friendship its real aim is political propaganda.

Anyway, I am right in saying there is a general conviction that with the settling down after the war there must be immense changes in the method of government. I have run across strata of opinion. "If Russia loses there will be revolution and a Republic be set up," and "If Russia wins there will still be a revolution if the old state of affairs be reinforced." Appreciating the volatile nature of the Slav, I venture to say there will be no such unfortunate consequence. Firstly, Russia is not going to lose. Secondly, Russia, like the rest of the world, will adapt herself, not frantically, but gradually to new conditions. The close alliance with France and Britain will count for a great deal. Russians are not braggarts. They know that in innumerable respects they lag far behind other countries. They are their own most severe critics. They feel there is much way to be made up, and running right through the people is a determination to seize their opportunities and advance Russia to the place she ought to occupy amongst the nations of the world.

Her closest students understand the tremendous latent abilities there are in the people, and wherever they have been well-directed, there is as much competence as elsewhere. Modern Russia's present ideas outrun her capabilities. But if men of energy arise, men who know what is needed and work zealously toward its attainment, men who have the strong will, which is a necessity to reform, Russia is going to make enormous progress within the next decade.

Hitherto Russia's leaders have been idealists, willing to sacrifice much for their ideals. It is splendid that Russians should have ideals; but the glory must not blind them to the practicalities of everyday life. And it is along this course that Russia is likely to direct her steps. The business men of Russia have in the main kept away from politics and have left them to the theorists. But the war has brought business men into the arena of practical, commercial, bread-and-butter politics. The Government has turned to them for assistance, and not in vain. There is public spirit in Russia—even when you have reckoned at the worst the peculations of officials—which indicates a desire at any rate to run things cleanly and honourably. The force of public opinion is toward breaking down the system whereby men have to be bribed to do their duty. The war has mentally sobered Russia. When Russia comes to ask herself in peace times: "Where are we going?" it is likely that ear will not be given to those who would produce the millennium by convulsion, but to those steady

voices which will counsel moderation so long as the nation is not stagnant but moving.

I write as an outsider, and I make no claim that my opinions are worth any more than those of a man who has taken a long and friendly interest in Russia, and who, just because he is an outsider, one who watches and weighs, may perhaps have a better view of the changes in the picture than those who are part of it. It is a commonplace amongst British people that in our relationship to each other we will never be able to return to the same conditions which prevailed in times before the war. We are too enthralled by mighty issues to realise how we have changed as a nation, how old distinctions have disappeared, how we are looking at things less from a class point of view and more from the national aspect. Some of us will rub our eyes when we take stock, but we will not want to go back. The same thing is happening in Russia.

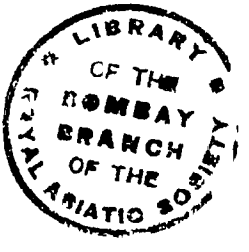
The fear that the autocracy will insist on a renewal of the ante-war conditions should be dismissed. No man in Russia is more ardent than the Czar himself that the country should advance along Western industrial lines, whilst retaining its own Slavonic characteristics. The improvements which have been effected within my time are astonishing. The work of the Zemstvos has been remarkable. But there has always been a lingering fear at the back of the powers that be that if Russia were "given its head" the reins would be seized by emotional idealists and the land would scamper to

destruction. In many ways Russians are like children, and one of the reasons is, because they have been treated as children. The war has, however, raised into sight the stern, unflinching, patriotic manhood of the race. The Government has put its confidence in the people, and the people, instead of rising in rebellion, as was prophesied, have stood by the Government, yet all the time frankly critical of Ministers who failed in their responsibility.

We know that the friendship between Russia and her Allies, cemented by the blood of their brave, will continue. We know that one of the consequences will be the brushing aside of many popular errors about Russia in the minds of Frenchmen and Englishmen. Englishmen, however, would not be satisfied if, as the outcome of the war, the internal affairs of Russia were not improved—not that it is their business to interfere with the domestic arrangements of another household, but because they can only remain in close friendship with the members of another household when they have interests and ambitions in common. England will not presume to dictate; but England will expect. And I have judged the drift of events all askew if England and the other Western nations are disappointed. I do not anticipate heroic reforms—the Russian people are in no way ripe for heroic reforms—but I do anticipate a closer and developing relationship between the Government and the nation, a greater confidence by the Government in the nation, a wider spread of educational facilities, a greater freedom in criticism, even

foolish criticism, for criticism by a nation is always healthy and sound, and a gradual training of the masses to bear their share of responsibility, for with responsibility comes caution.

The day may be far distant when the Russians, under a constitutional administration, can exclaim "We are the State." But the sure way to make a nation happy and prosperous is for those at the head of affairs to have a warm confidence that the soul and the heart of the people are right. For then their actions will not go astray.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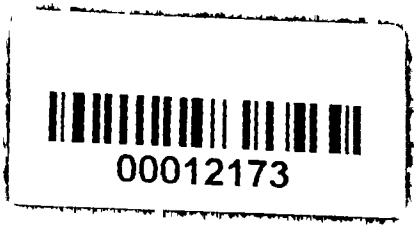

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